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**The Making of a Sufi Order between Heresy and Legitimacy: Bayrami-Malāmis
in the Ottoman Empire**

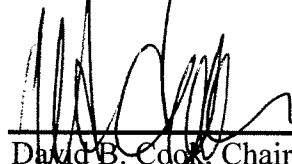
by

F. Betul Yavuz

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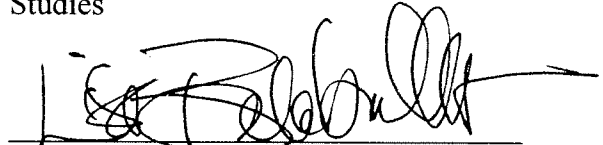
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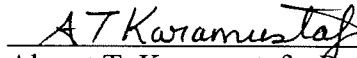
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ABSTRACT

The Making of a Sufi Order Between Heresy and Legitimacy:
Bayrami-Malāmis in the Ottoman Empire

by
F. Betül Yavuz

Revolutionary currents with transformative ideals were part of Sufi religious identity during the late medieval Islamic period. This dissertation tries to elucidate this phenomenon by focusing on the historical evolution of the Bayrami-Malāmi Sufi order within the Ottoman Empire. The scope of the study extends from the beginnings of the order during the ninth/fifteenth century until its partial demise by the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century.

The Bayrami-Malāmiyya was marked by a reaction towards the established Sufi rituals of the time: adherents refused to wear Sufi clothes, take part in gatherings of remembrance of God, or rely upon imperial endowments for their livelihood. I suggest they carried some of the distinguishing signs of religiosity of the anarchic period between the Mongol attacks and the rise of the powerful Islamic Empires. Many local forms of Sufism had emerged, tied to charismatic, independent communities quite prevalent and powerful in their own domains. They often held particular visions regarding the saint, whose persona came to be defined in terms exceeding that of a spiritual master, often as a community elder or universal savior.

Inspired by this period, Bayrami-Malāmis reconstructed their teachings and affiliations as the social and political conditions shifted in Anatolia. While several *pīrs* were executed for heresy and messianic claims in the sixteenth century, the Order was able to put together a more prudent vision based on the writings of Ibn ‘Arabi (d. 1240)

during the seventeenth. After this, it became a secretive order that attracted the upper classes in the imperial city of Istanbul, extending its influence to imminent poets, bureaucrats, and political figures.

This study is essentially concerned with these evolutionary dynamics. It also tries to conceptualize how the Order's teachings were rooted in the persona of the saint, who was regarded in divine terms and seen as the culmination point of creation. This worldview had the potential to lead to apocalyptic urges that did not harbor the immediate end of the world, but yearned for the beginning of a new era in which people would understand and experience divinity in its true monistic fashion.

Acknowledgments

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If it were not for the individuals who have read and made corrections on my writing, this dissertation would have never reached its final form. I am thankful to David B. Cook who read different versions of the dissertation and sent corrections each time; to Lisa Balabanlilar who helped me situate the Order in a more clearly defined historical context; to Jeffrey Kripal and Ahmet T. Karamustafa who have provided me with encouragement and new questions to consider in my research.

I need to thank April DeConick for teaching me how to think about the formation and evolution of religious traditions. Over the years I have been inspired by her success as a woman in academia, and her passion for writing and sharing her thinking. I am also

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I am indeed thankful to my husband who has been there with me through my entire struggle and provided me with comfort and friendship. As I complete this dissertation, I am also watching my son turn into a young boy. I am grateful that he has brought a level of maturity to my life that I could not think of before.

Note on Transliteration

Finding consistency in transliteration is difficult when research ranges across Arabic, Persian, Ottoman and Modern Turkish. The choice of transliteration system was guided by context (thus, *tekbîr* rather *takbîr* in transliterating from Ottoman Turkish), though the transliteration of certain often-used words (*qalandar*, *zāwiya*) has been rendered uniform throughout the manuscript in order not to confuse the reader. The Arabic definite article is omitted from proper names (e.g. Ardabili, not al-Ardabili). The ending *t* (ة) in the Arabic *idāfa* is vocalized (e.g. *hidāyat al-hūdā*), while the ending *h* (ه) is only given as *a* or *e* (e.g. Bayramiyya, *nāme*, *zāde*) The Persian *idāfa* is indicated as *-i* (*-yi* for words ending in vowels). Modern Turkish orthography is used for Turkish proper names (e.g. Kayseri, not Qaysari), and Turkish names with Arabic origins appear in their Turkish forms, without additional diacritics (e.g. Pir Ali, not Pir ‘Ali; Askeri, not ‘Askerī or ‘Askarī). I have used a modified form of the IJMES system as detailed below:

Arabic OT				Arabic OT				Arabic OT			
MT				MT				MT			
ء	’	’	—	ژ	—	j	j	م	m	m	m
ب	b	b	b, p	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n
پ	—	p	p	ش	sh	ş	ş	ه	h	h	h
ت	t	t	t	ص	ş	s	s	و	w	v	v
ث	th	s	s	ض	ḍ	z	z		y	y	y
ج	j	j	c	ط	ṭ	t	t				
چ	—	ç	ç	ز	z	z	z	ا	ā		
ح	ḥ	h	h	ع	‘	‘	—	و	ū		
خ	kh	h	h	غ	gh	ḡ	ḡ	ي	ī		
د	d	d	d	ف	f	f	f				
ذ	dh	z	z	ق	q	k	k				
ر	r	r	r	ك	k	k	k				
ز	z	z	z	ل	l	l	l				

Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

Abbreviations

'Atayi	Nev'izade 'Atayi. <i>Hada'iku'l-haka'ik fi takmilatu'l-shaka'ik</i> . Published by Abdülkadir Özcan, as volume 2 of <i>Şaka'ik-</i> . Istanbul: Çağrı, 1989.
AÜİFD	<i>Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi</i> .
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> .
DBIA	<i>Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi</i> .
EP ²	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i> , Second Edition.
Elr	<i>Encyclopedia Iranica</i> .
ER	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion</i> .
İÜİFM	<i>İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası</i> .
MEBIA	<i>Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı İslam Ansiklopedisi</i> .
Mecdi	Mecdi Mehmet Efendi. <i>Hada'iq al-Shaqa'iq</i> . Published by Abdülkadir Özcan, as volume 1 of <i>Şakaik-i Nu'maniyye ve Zeyilleri</i> . Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989.
MI	Ismail E. Erünsal, <i>XV-XVI. Asır Bayrami-Melamiliği'nin Kaynaklarından Abdurrahman el-Askeri'nin Mir'atü'l-'işk'ı</i> . Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003.
MM	A. Gölpınarlı. <i>Melamilik ve Melamiler</i> . Istanbul: Milenyum Yayınları, 2006.
OTDTS	Mehmet Zeki Pakalın. <i>Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü</i> . 3 volumes. Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1983.
SE	Osman H. Vassaf, <i>Sefine-i Evliya</i> . 6 volumes. Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2006
Semerat	Sarı Abdullah. <i>Semeratu'l-fuad fi'l-mabda' wa'l-ma'ad</i> . Istanbul: Matbaa-i Āmire, 1288/1871.
TDVIA	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi</i> .
ZM	Ahmet Yaşar Ocak. <i>Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15. ve 17. Yüzyıllar)</i> . Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Note on Transliteration	vi
Abbreviations	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Scope and Context of the Study	1
Sources for the Study of Bayrami-Malāmis.....	7
<i>Ottoman (Sufi) Biographical Dictionaries</i>	7
<i>Works by Bayrami-Malāmis</i>	9
<i>Modern Studies</i>	12
Chapter 1. Laying the Background	14
Regarding Saints and Kings in a Messianic Age	14
Regarding the <i>Malāmi</i> Title.....	18
Shaykh Bedreddin and The End of Days	22
Hurufis and the Apocalypse: Man as the Locus of the Divine	31
Conclusion	46
Chapter 2. Historiography of the Beginnings: The Shaykh and the Community.....	47
Mapping the <i>Silsila</i> : The Safavids and the Ottomans	47
Activities of Shaykh Hamid	51
The Makings of Charisma: Who was Haji Bayram Wali?.....	56
Doctrine of Oneness of Being According to the Bayramis.....	65
Qalandari tendencies in the early years of the Bayramiyya.....	67
Final words on Haji Bayram’s Heritage	70
A Disciple from the Madrasa: Akşemseddin	72
“Let the Fire Decide”: The Circumstances of the Split	78
Regarding the Town of Göynük.....	82
Bünyamin Ayaşı (d. 918/1513?).....	85
Conclusion	86
Chapter 3. Circumstances of The Conflict with the State	89
The Rise of Pir Ali Aksarayı.....	89
The Case of Ismail Maşuki	101
Dealing With the Trauma: Ahmed Sarban and Husameddin Ankaravi	114
Melamis in the Balkans and The Case of Hamza Bali	121
Conclusion	129
Chapter 4. The Order Redefining Itself and Settling In Istanbul	131
Towards Finding Ways of Accommodation: Hasan Kabaduz of Bursa	131
Entering a New Phase: Bayrami-Malāmis in Istanbul	134
Sarı Abdullah Efendi.....	138
Oğlan Shaykh Ibrahim Efendi	145

End of an Era (Execution of Sütçü Beşir Ağa)	152
Conclusion	158
Chapter 5. Teachings: God, Cosmos, and the Awliyā'	160
I. Body and Spirit, Cosmos and God	163
Human Being as the Goal of Creation.....	168
Reincarnatory Eschatology.....	174
The Cult of <i>Awliyā'</i>	180
'Alid Loyalty and the Apocalyptic Vision	183
Conclusion	189
CONCLUSION.....	190
Bibliography	195
Works in Manuscript	195
Published Works.....	195

INTRODUCTION

Scope and Context of the Study

Around the year 1092/1681, a dissident Sufi shaykh, Niyazi Misri (d. 1105/1694), wrote in his diary how he had asked an ex-courtier whether anyone had been left in high circles who was not a Hamzavi. The courtier answered that only one was left, and that was Köprülüzade Mustafa (d. 1102/1691). The latter was from the powerful Köprülü family, had been educated in the *madrasa*, and was a religious man with a puritanical approach. This outward image of his, however, did not prevent Misri from insisting that Mustafa, whom he did not like much, was “the greatest of the irreligious” (*dinsizlerin en büyüğü*) and the “the chief of the heretics and Hamzavis” (*reisu’l mulhidin ve’l hamzavin*).¹

This diary entry by Misri summarizes the situation during the late decades of the seventeenth century. The account shows how influential and widespread the Hamzavis (a branch of Bayrami-Malāmis) had become among elites at the royal court, approximately a century after their severe persecution in Bosnia at the hands of local judges. How is it that an order known for its irreligiousness and heresy, as well as its criticism of the Ottoman state, had become a point of attraction for the high classes of Istanbul? Furthermore, what was it about their teachings that made them labeled as irreligious and heretic? What kind of network did they operate in that even the most puritanical could be imagined to secretly belong to their fold?

¹ Derin Terzioğlu, “Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyāzī-i Misrī (1618-1694)” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1999), 338-9.

This study examines how the Bayrami-Malāmi tradition was formed and developed by the time it was perceived as a courtly, and yet, heretical sect by the end of the seventeenth century. It tries to understand the ways in which Bayrami-Malāmis adjusted to the changing socio-cultural milieu of their time by making use of the flexibility of the tradition and how they endured with tenacity through long centuries of the Ottoman state.

The Bayrami-Malāmiyya first appeared as a branch of the Bayramiyya Sufi order, which was founded by Haji Bayram Wali (d. 833/1430) in the fifteenth century. This particular branch distinguished itself by refusing to abide by the high levels of institutionalization that Sufi orders were going through at the time. Thus the Bayrami-Malāmiyya was essentially marked by a reaction towards the established Sufi rituals, clothes, and reliance upon imperial endowments (*waqf*).² Through this, the first representatives of the Order seem to have sought to retain some form of independence rather than following highly constricting practices of the state bureaucracy.³ This instinct to stay independent preserved itself during the following decades, and was coupled with messianic declarations during the sixteenth century.

I argue in this study that this longing for independent religious identity can be best understood in relation to the particular dynamics of the social life of religion in the Islamic East. During the period between the Mongol attacks and the rise of three powerful Islamic empires (Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals), many local forms of Sufism had emerged and these were tied to charismatic and independent communities which

² *Waqf* signifies an endowment by which either a sultan or imperial notable granted a Sufi shaykh property to support himself and his followers.

³ See Nile Green, *Sufism*, 132-6, for a discussion of the high levels of bureaucracy surrounding the Sufi brotherhoods within the Ottoman Empire.

were quite prevalent and powerful in their own domains. These communities produced their own understandings regarding the saint, whose persona came to be defined in terms exceeding that of a spiritual master, often taking the form of a community elder/leader. If a particular movement emerging from these local forms of religiosity sought to make a more universal impact, it often made use of messianic expectations that were quite prevalent in the Islamic East at the time. In this sense, it was not a far-fetched idea that the saint could be pictured as the Mahdi by his followers, some of whom even choosing to take military action for his cause.

While one can think of various movements that seem to have taken inspiration from this “anarchic” religious milieu of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in a landscape extending from the Balkans to India, the Bayrami-Malāmis stand out among them because of the way they reconstructed their teachings, affiliations, and outreach as the social and political conditions shifted in Anatolia. Not only did they continue to remain a distinct community that remained faithful to their teachings, but also extended their influence from their local supporters (consisting of small business owners and soldiers), to imminent bureaucrats by the end of the seventeenth century.

The community of Bayrami-Malāmis shared a belief system that accepted the sovereignty of the saint. The belief was rooted in a specific form of monism, which pictured the divine being continually manifesting itself in the universe, and finally reaching apex in the persona of the saint. Therefore, sainthood was understood in special terms, often seen as the highest representation of the divinity that particles of the universe could come together to achieve. A distinct understanding regarding eschatology also marked this belief system. Because the existence, in its totality, was a continual

manifestation of the divine essence, it could not possibly come to an end. On the smaller scale of each individual being, death meant that the particular elements of one body would dissolve and move onto reconstructing new bodies. This occurrence was described in terms that came close to *tanāsukh*, one of the main teachings to which heresiographers accused the *ghulāt*⁴ of adhering.

Thus the Bayrami-Malāmiyya treaded a very thin line between heresy and legitimacy for centuries, and continued to do so without becoming isolated from the larger populations of the Ottoman society. In this sense, the Order is a rare mirror that reflects some of the most intricate themes of Islamic religiosity under the Ottoman state.

This study examines the Bayrami-Malāmi tradition in five chapters. The first chapter provides a detailed description of the specifics of the religious milieu by the turn of the fifteenth century. It provides preliminary information regarding the particularities of the Sufi orders and the local importance of the saint based on recent scholarship. I contribute to the discussion by focusing on two revolutionary mystical communities of the fifteenth century—those of Fazlallah Hurufi (ex.796/1394) and Shaykh Bedreddin (ex. 820/1416). Both of these movements help us understand the dynamics of the Bayrami-Malāmiyya in specific ways, as they share similar views regarding the experience of the divine, the human being, and the society.

The second chapter focuses on the early founders of the Bayrami Sufi order, Hamideddin Aksarayi (d. 815/1412) and Haji Bayram Wali (d. 833/1430). It also

⁴*Ghulāt*, “extremists”, a term of disapproval for individuals accused of exaggeration (*ghulū*) in religion. By heresiographers it was applied particularly to those Shi‘is whose doctrines Ithna‘ashari Imami orthodoxy has regarded as exaggerated in reverence for the imāms or in other ways. In practice, the term has covered all early speculative Shi‘is except those later accepted by Ithna‘ashari tradition. For more information see, “Ghulāt (singular, ghālī)” *EF*² (M. G. S. Hodgson); “Gōlāt” *EIr* (Heinz Halm).

discusses the happenings after the death of Haji Bayram, and how Akşemseddin (d. 863/1459) and Emir Dede (d. 880/1476) emerged as two opposing figures, both claiming to be the rightful heir of the Bayrami heritage. While Akşemseddin practiced classical Sufi rituals and carried himself as an established Sufi shaykh with ties to the Ottoman ruling family, Emir Dede refused this identity, and chose to follow a more freewheeling road by renouncing the specific Bayrami dress and rituals, especially chanting the name of God in public or private gatherings (*dhikr*). This study tries to make sense of this renunciation by referring to the reactionary mode of the qalandari dervishes who expressed deep resentment towards the heavy institutionalization of Sufism at the time.

The third chapter focuses on the sixteenth century as a time of mounting messianic urges within the Bayrami-Malāmi tradition. It was during the time of Pir Ali Aksarayi (d. 945/1539) that Bayrami-Malāmiyya became more defined as a separate branch of Bayramis with what was considered to be questionable behavior. Pir Ali's son Ismail Maşuki, a young boy at the time, blatantly declared his father's worldview in Istanbul. Accused of being a heretic and claiming to be the Messiah, he was swiftly executed in the year 945/1539. This chapter also discusses how the Order struggled with this incident and came up with different ways of expressing themselves. It also examines the case of Hamza Bali, founder of the Hamzavi branch in Bosnia, who was also executed under similar circumstances with Ismail Maşuki in Istanbul in 980/1573. The Hamzavi activity in Bosnia, however, continued to be effective, and during the following decades, groups of men and women initiated insurgences often led by individuals claiming to be the heirs of Hamza Bali's heritage. The Ottoman state responded by

putting various villages and cities in the Balkans under close inspection, imprisoning or beheading anyone who was suspected to harbor Hamzavi ideas.

By the seventeenth century, on the other hand, Istanbul had become the center of Bayrami-Malāmi activity. The fourth chapter of this study looks into the circumstances of this development and examines lives and writings of several figures who served as its main agents. Some of these figures kept their association with the Bayrami-Malāmi order a secret and mingled with various other Sufi orders in order to defuse suspicions. It was also during this time that the teachings were placed into a new framework as a result of this close affiliation with the elite and upper classes of the society. In a fascinating twist, on the other hand, these classes seem to have been exceptionally attracted to the notion that there existed such profound esoteric truths that these could only be revealed to the initiated and that they needed to be guarded under heavy secrecy at all times.

The fourth chapter also discusses how suspicion hanging over the Order continued and Beşir Ağa (ex. 1073/1662) became the last martyr among the Bayrami-Malāmi *pîrs* executed under the fatwa of the *shaykh al-islām* of the time. He was smothered and then thrown into the sea in Istanbul at the age of ninety. After this point, the Order never quite regained their previous status and went completely into hiding. The following *pîrs*, we are told, were men of high political and religious status within the Empire, but refused to come together with Bayrami-Malāmi adherents and expand the circle.

The fifth chapter examines the teachings of the order, specifically as they were outlined in the Bayrami-Malāmi writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I begin this chapter by providing some information regarding the Sufi heritage that these writings saw themselves to be following; and then present the ideas they held with

regards to the understanding of God, the universe, the human being, the saint, and salvation. The overall narrative is placed within a loose enough framework so that different voices within the tradition can be recognized.

Sources for the Study of Bayrami-Malāmis

Ottoman (Sufi) Biographical Dictionaries

The principal general Ottoman biographical dictionaries include a great deal of information regarding Bayrami-Malāmi figures. For the scope of this dissertation, extending between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Atayi's (d.1045/1635) *Hada'ikü'l'haka'ik fi Tekmileti's-Şaka'ik*,⁵ is most useful. It is a supplement to Ahmed Taşköprülüzade's (d. 968/1561) bibliographical dictionary *Şaka'ik al-Nu'maniyye*, and covers the period between 965/1557-1044/1634. *Şaka'ik*'s Turkish translation, Mecdi's *Hada'ikü'l'Şaka'ik*⁶ contains some information regarding the early Bayrami historiography.

For the later period, *Zeyl-i Şaka'ik*⁷ by Uşşakizade (d. 1136/1723) and *Vekayi'ü'l-fudela*⁸ by Seyhi (d. 1145/1732), both of which are supplements to Atayi's *Hada'ikü'l-haka'ik*, provide restricted information on some of the Bayrami-Malāmi figures that lived

⁵ Nevizade Atayi, *Hada'ikü'l'haka'ik fi Tekmileti's-Şakaik*, Facsimile published with an index by Abdulkadir Özcan as volume 2 of *Şakaik-i Numaniye ve Zeyilleri*. (Istanbul: Çağrı Yay., 1989).

⁶ Mecdi Mehmed Efendi, *Hada'ikü'l'şaka'ik*. Facsimile published with an index by Abdulkadir Özcan as volume 2 of *Şaka'ik-i Nu'maniye ve Zeyilleri*. Istanbul: Çağrı, 1989.

⁷ Uşşakizade, *Zeyl-i şakaik*. Facsimile published by Hans Joachim Kissling with an index as *Ussaqizade's Lebensbeschreibungen beuhmter Gelehrter und Gottesmanner des Osmanischen Reiches im 17. Jahrhundert*, (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 1965).

⁸ Seyhi Mehmed Efendi, *Vekayiui'l-fudalā*. Facsimile published with an index by Abdulkadir Özcan as volume 3-4 of *Şakaik-i Numaniye ve Zeyilleri*. (Istanbul: Çağrı Yay., 1989).

in Istanbul in the seventeenth century. For this later period, Katib Çelebi's *Fezleke*⁹ includes similar information with regards to several Bayrami-Malāmi figures.

Among the Sufi figures of the Ottoman realm, it is especially Khalwatis that seem to have sustained close connections with the Bayrami-Malāmi order. In this sense, various Khalwati sources include information regarding the Bayrami-Malāmi figures as well. Among these, Seyyid Seyfullah's (d.1010/1601) *Cami'u'l-ma'arif*¹⁰ cites several Bayrami-Malāmi personalities in Istanbul and the Balkans, and provides detailed information on them. Two other sources from the seventeenth century, *Hediyyetu'l-ihvan*¹¹ and *Lemezât-i hulviyye*,¹² also include interesting information regarding various Bayrami-Malāmi figures in Istanbul. Müniri-i Belgradi's (d.1026/1617) *Silsiletü'l-mukarrebîn*¹³, on the other hand, is quite beneficial for its insight into the Hamzavi movement in Bosnia.

Sufi biographical works that specifically deal with a group known as "Bayrami-Malāmiyya" appear quite late. It is not until Haririzade Kemaleddin's (d.1299/1882), *Tibyan wasa'il al-haqa'iq*,¹⁴ that the Order finds extensive treatment within a

⁹ Hacı Halife Mustafa b. Abdullah Katib Celebi, *Fezleke-i Katib Çelebi* (Istanbul Ceride-I Havadis Matbaası, 1287).

¹⁰ Seyyid Seyfullah, *Cāmiu'l-ma'arif*. Süleymaniye Library, Hacı Mahmud Efendi coll., no. 2335.

¹¹ Osman Türer, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvufî Hayat –Halvetilik Ornegi- Hediyyetu'l-Ihvan* (Istanbul: İnsan Yay., 2005).

¹² Mehmet Serhan Tayşi, *Lemezât-i hulviyye ez lemezât-i ulviyye (Yuce Velilerin Tatli Halleri)*, (Istanbul: IFAY, 1993).

¹³ Müniri Belgradi, "Silsiletü'l-mukarrebîn ve menâkibu'l- muttekîn," Süleymaniye Library, Şehit Ali Paşa Coll., no. 2819/3. Nathalie Clayer studied this treatise in detail: Nathalie Clayer, "L'œil D'un Savant de Belgrade Sur Les Melâmis-Bayrâmis À La Fin Du XVIe-Début du XVIIe Siecle," in *Melâmis-Bayrâmis: Études sur Trios Movements Mystiques Musulmans*, edited by Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone, (Istanbul: Les Éditions Isis, 1998), 153-76. There is also a masters' thesis that includes the Latinized version of the risale. Taxhidin Bitici, "Müniri Belgradi ve Sisiletü'l Mukarrebîn Adlı Eseri" (Masters' Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2001).

¹⁴ Seyyid Mehmed Kemaleddin Haririzade, *Tibyan wasa'il al-haqa'iq fi bayan salasil al-tara'iq*, Süleymaniye Library, İbrahim Efendi coll., no. 430, 431, 432; the information on Malâmis is found in the third volume, no. 142, 140a-143b.

comprehensive Sufi compilation. Haririzade studies the group under the comprehensive title of the Malāmātiyya, which for him includes three different, and yet interrelated phases. He describes the first phase as the original Malāmāti movement and discusses the development of the Malāmātiyya in Khurasan in the ninth century. The Melamiyye-i Bayramiyya is presented as the second phase of the Malamati movement sharing the same sensibilities of the prior movement. For the third phase, he studies Melamiyye-i Nuriyye, which was founded by Muhammad Nur al-Arabi (d. 1305/1888) in the Balkans. Haririzade, in fact, belonged to the Melamiyye-i Nuriyye, and his depiction might be seen as a way of presenting his own Sufi lineage in a meaningful manner.

Following on Haririzade's model, several Sufi biographical dictionaries of the late nineteenth century included separate entries on Bayrami-Malāmī. Among these, Osmanzade Hüseyin Vassaf's (d. 1348/1929) *Sefī ne-i evliya'* provides detailed information regarding the Bayrami-Malāmī figures under the title of Bayramiyya and Hamzaviyya.¹⁵ Sadık Vıcdani's (d. 1934) *Tomar-i turuk-u 'aliyye'*¹⁶ also discusses the Malāmātiyya under three consecutive phases, and yet employs a more suspicious tone regarding the Bayrami-Malāmī teachings.

Works by Bayrami-Malāmīs

We have a couple of very valuable sources helping us decipher the worldview of Bayrami-Malāmīyya. Among these Askeri's *Miratu'l- 'ishk* (*The Mirror of Love*, written in 957/ca. 1550) is especially valuable as the earliest and one of the most detailed

¹⁵ Osmanzade Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefī ne-i Evliya'*, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2006).

¹⁶ Abu Ridvan Sadık Vıcdani. *Tomar-i turuk-u 'aliye* (Istanbul: Evkaf-ı İslamiye Matbaası, Matba'a-yi Amire, 1338-1340).

accounts of the Bayrami-Malāmi historiography and worldview. Some of the most exciting information regarding the early figures of the Ottoman Melamiyya is found here, and therefore it serves as the primary source for various sections of this study.

Starting from the early seventeenth century, specific treatises devoted to explaining the Bayrami-Malāmi teachings start to appear. As the order spreads into the elite of Istanbul, more expositions of the teachings seem to have been needed for practical and pedagogical reasons. One important example of this current is *Irshadname*¹⁷ (*Letter of Guidance*) written in the year 1009/1600-1 by a certain Hakiki.

Sarı Abdullah's (d. 1071/1660) *Semeratu'l-fu'ad fi'l-mabda' wa'l-ma'ad* (*Fruits of the Heart in the Beginning and the End*) is a fascinating source as well, containing valuable information on the Bayrami-Malāmi hagiology and teachings of the order. The *Semerat* also provides valuable insights into the psyche of Sarı Abdullah who was an imminent Ottoman gentleman who was trying to explain the shady Bayrami-Malāmi organization for which he had deep sympathies. In this sense, the *Semerat* contains examples of curbing the teachings in accordance with the main Islamic texts, and portraying Ottoman Melamis under the light of the executed and yet respected Sufis of the past centuries.

Other significant sources of information during the seventeenth century are writings of Ibrahim Efendi (1591-1655) and his disciple Sunullah Gaybi (d.1072/1661). Especially Sunullah Gaybi's collection of sayings of Ibrahim Efendi, *Sohbetname*,¹⁸ reveals intimate moments of unveiled instruction and personal discourse. Ibrahim

¹⁷ *Irşadname (Risale-i Hakiki)*, Süleymaniye Library, Mihrişah Sultan Coll, no. 203, 47b-63a. See chapter 4 for more information regarding the author, and chapter 5 for some quotes from this risale. It can also be found in Abdurrezzak Tek, *Melamet Risaleleri: Bayrami Melamiligi'ne Dair*, 343-70.

¹⁸ *Sohbetname*, Süleymaniye Library, Hacı Mahmud Efendi coll., no. 3137, 1a-40a.

Efendi's poetry is quite illuminating regarding his belief system as well.¹⁹ Sunullah Gaybi, on the other hand, was quite vocal in explaining his worldview through various treatises, including *Biatname*, *Ruhu'l-Hakika*, and *Tarik-i Teveccuh ve Mukarebe*.²⁰ A later Bayrami-Malāmi figure, Üsküdarlı Haşim Baba's (d. 1197/1782) *Esrāru' l-ilahiyyun ve etvaru'l-melamiyyun*,²¹ can be seen as following this tradition and is an interesting and concise exposition of the teachings.

Lalizade Abdalbaki's (d.1159/1746), *Tarikat-i 'Aliyye-i Bayramiyye'den Taiife-i Melamiyye'nin 'An 'Ane-i Iradetleri*,²² more commonly known under the name *Sergüzeşt* tells the story of the order following in the footsteps of Sarı Abdullah. It also includes interesting anecdotes from him, which are not recorded in the *Semerat*. Mustakimzade Süleyman Sa'deddin's (d.1202/1788) *Risale-i Melamiyye-i Bayramiyye*,²³ continues on this tradition and extends the narrative by providing detailed reports regarding the later Bayrami-Malāmi figures.

¹⁹ Although not a very careful edition, this study containing Ibrahim Efendi's poetry is beneficial: Rahmi Yananlı, *Hazret-i Dil-i Dana: Oğlan Şeyh Ibrahim Efendi Külliyyatı* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2008). Bilal Kemikli, on the other hand, published another collection of his poems: Bilal Kemikli, *Mufid-ü Muhtasar Inceleme Metin* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2003).

²⁰ These *risales* can be found in this order in Suleymaniye Library, Tahir Ağa Tekke Coll., no. 422, 1b-28b. Abdurrahman Doğan's study of his works is also beneficial: Abdurrahman Doğan, *Kütahyalı Sunullah Gaybi: Hayatı, Fikirleri, Eserleri* (Istanbul: Önde Matbaacılık, 2001).

²¹ Suleymaniye Library, Resid Efendi coll. No. 784. This risale can also be found in Tek, *Melamet Risaleleri*, 391-400.

²² Lalizade Abdalbaki, *Tarikat-i Aliyye-i Bayramiyye'den Taiife-i Melamiyye'nin 'An 'Ane-i Iradetleri ve Keyfiyyet-i sohbetleri ve ask-i muhabbetullah cumleden ziyade rağbetleri beyanındadır*, (Istanbul: Mihran Matbaası, 1296 /1879).

²³ Mustakimzade Suleyman Sadeddin, "Risale-i Melamiyye-i Bayramiyye" Istanbul University Library, Ibnu'l-Emin Ty Collection, no. 3357. A latinicized form of this *risale* can be found in Abdurrezzak Tek, "Mustakim-zade Suleyman Sadeddin'in Risale-i Melamiyye-i Bayramiyye Adlı Eserinin Metni ve Tahlili" (Masters' Thesis, Uludağ University, 2000) 58-138.

Modern Studies

The Bayrami-Malāmiyya attracted significant attention in modern Turkish scholarship. As the primary researcher in the area, Abdalbaki Gölpınarlı should be specifically cited. His *Melamilik ve Melamiler*²⁴ continues to be the most extensive research focusing on the writings and historiography of the Bayrami-Malāmis. Here, Gölpınarlı continues on the tradition of studying the Malāmatiyya in three phases, and understands the Order as a clear continuation of the original Malamati movement. Other modern studies that continue this tradition includes an edited volume by Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone under the title *Malāmis-Bayramis: Etudes sur trois mouvements mystiques musulmans*.²⁵ Recently the author Yannis Toussulis conducted a study of the same vein titled *Sufism and The Way of Blame*. In this book, the author tries to make sense of the Malāmati tradition extending over twelve centuries of Islamic civilization and reserves one chapter of the book to the Bayrami-Malāmis.²⁶

Ahmed Yaşar Ocak has put forth another significant current in Turkish scholarship for the study of the Bayrami-Malāmiyya. He presents the Order as deeply messianic and heretical in his *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, relying mostly on the viewpoint of the Ottoman Imperial narrative.²⁷ Another historian, Colin Imber seems to have shared a similar point of view.²⁸

²⁴ Abdalbaki Gölpınarlı, *Melamilik ve Melamiler* (Istanbul: Milenyum Yay., 2006); first published in 1930.

²⁵ Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone (eds), *Malāmis-Bayramis: Etudes sur Trois Mouvements Mystiques Musulmans* (Istanbul: Les Éditions Isis, 1998).

²⁶ Yannis Toussulis, *Sufism and the Way of Blame: Hidden Sources of a Sacred Psychology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, 2010), 91-116.

²⁷ Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Mülhidler ve Zındıklar (15. ve 17. Yüzyıllar)* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 251-311. His other publications regarding Bayrami-Malāmis include: idem, “XVI-XVII Yüzyıllarda Bayrami Melamileri ve Osmanlı Yönetimi” *Belleten* 59 (1997); idem, “Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devrinde Osmanlı Resmi Düşüncesine Karşı Bir Tepki Hareketi: Oğlan Şeyh İsmail-i Maşuki,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 10 (1990): 49-58; idem, “XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Anadoluşunda Mesihyanik

The Bayrami-Malāmi order continues to receive significant attention in modern Turkey. Various populist writings, most of which rely on Gölpınarlı's scholarship, appear one after the other.²⁹ Some of these present a distinct modern spin, trying to bring together a Melami teaching that is compliant with the needs of the individual in the modern world. These writings do not typically adhere to the idea that Bayrami-Malāmis were messianic, or held questionable beliefs from the viewpoint of mainstream Islam.

Hareketlerinin Bir Tahlil Denemesi" in *V. Milletlerarası Türkiye Sosyal ve İktisat Tarihi Kongresi-Tebliğler* (Ankara, 1990), 817-25. Ocak's perspective can be felt in this study regarding the life and teachings of İbrahim Efendi. Ayşe Asude Soysal, "XVII. Yüzyılda Bir Bayrami-Malāmi Kutbu: Oğlan(lar) Seyh(i) İbrahim Efendi" (PhD diss., Hacettepe University, 2005).

²⁸ Colin Imber, "The Malāmatıyya in the Ottoman Empire," *Studies in Ottoman History and Law* (İstanbul, 1996); the same article appears in *Encyclopedia of Islam*: "Malāmatıyya, 3. In Ottoman Lands" *Et*² (Colin Imber).

²⁹ Baki Yaşa Altınok, *Hacı Bayram Veli, Bayramilik, Melamiler ve Melamilik* (Ankara: Oba Kitabevi, 1995);

Mehmet Hakan Alşan, *Hamzavî Melamîler, Melâmet Hırkası: İkinci Kuşak Horasan Erenleri* (İstanbul: Karakutu Yayınları, 2007).

Chapter 1. Laying the Background

Regarding Saints and Kings in a Messianic Age

The religious milieu of the Turko-Iranian lands by the fifteenth century was shaped by several factors. The Mongol invasions of the seventh/thirteenth century had disrupted urban centers, political cultures, and religious associations across much of Muslim Asia. The new sociopolitical order that took shape following this disruption developed specific relationships with institutions and networks of mystical religiosity. Some of these developments will be summarized here under four preliminary points based on the recent scholarship regarding this era.³⁰

Firstly, as the Islamic world from Anatolia to India came to be ruled by Turkic and Mongol tribal groups, dynamics of the way Sufism functioned changed. Political actors emerging from these groups had to recognize and receive support from the local saints, while the saint had to make use of tribal forms of community-building in an age where political loyalties often shifted. Therefore tribal and spiritual forms of devotion and loyalty have become so interwoven that monarchs emerging from this anarchic social

³⁰ Kathryn Babayan's *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, Nile Green's *Sufism, A Global History*, and Moin Azfar's *The Millennial Sovereign* have been specifically helpful in understanding this era. For general overviews of religious activity during this period also see: Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1974), 493-500; B. S. Amoretti, "Religion under the Timurids and the Šafavids" in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, eds. Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 610-23; Michel Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Šafawids: Ši'ism, Šūfism and the Ġulāt* (Wiesbaden: F Steiner, 1972); Shahzad Bashir, "Between Mysticism and Messianism: The Life and Thought of Muhammad Nurbakš (d. 1464)," (PhD diss., Yale University, 1997), 8-74; idem, *Messianic Hopes Mystical Visions: The Nurbakshīyya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003); Annemarie Schimmel, "The Ornament of the Saints: The Religious Situation in Iran in Pre-Šafavid Times," *Iranian Studies* 7 (1974): 88-111; "Iran, ix. Religions in Iran, (2) Islam in Iran (2.2) Mongol and Timurid Periods" *Elr* (H. Algar).

scene made use of the language of devotion that signified the spiritual domain of the saint, while the saint acted as the head of his community much like a political leader.³¹

Secondly, as result of mass destruction caused by the Mongolian attacks in prominent centers of Islamic learning, local forms of religiosity became more prevalent. The process came to be defined by local actors who at times took inspiration from pre-Islamic religious ideas, some of which had been defined as *ghulāt* in heresiographical works of the past centuries. Saintliness was deeply interwoven with these concepts, because as Moin puts it, “what may appear as “heresy” from a doctrinal point of view was, in many cases, a ritual engagement with popular forms of saintliness and embodied forms of sacrality that were broadly and intuitively accepted by much of the populace as morally valid and spiritually potent.”³²

Thirdly, this age saw the rise of messianic activity within every aspect of the social milieu, and Sufi Islam became one of the primary agents of expressing this yearning for a new age. Sufi characters emerging from different regions of Islamic Asia claimed apocalyptic roles for themselves.³³ They claimed to be the savior who would

³¹ Algar’s comments are quite valuable in understanding the change in the image of the dervish during the 13th century in “Darvīš” *Elr* (H. Algar). Also see Green, 99 “While the precise origins of the practice are unclear, from the fifteenth century in the region stretching between Anatolia and India, we find more and more saints being described through the terminology of kingship. Saints were termed “emperors” (*shah*), their shrines called “royal courts” (*dargah*), and their headgear considered “crowns” (*taj*), designations which may have begun among the followers of “Shah” Ni‘matullah Wali (d. 834/1431) in eastern Iran. As over a period of status, in many regions saintly dynasties became a more permanent and long-lived “establishment” class than the shorter-lived dynasties of kings... after 1500 this conflict of status played out in several different directions, from Sufis overthrowing Sultans to become rulers themselves to new sorts of early modern state seeking closer control of the Sufis in their domains.” It needs to be noted that Bayrami-Malāmīs called the *pir sultan* exhibiting a similar kind of consciousness.

³² Moin, 6.

³³ Several movements have been tied to this prevalent messianic atmosphere of the time. Among these, there is the Sarbadarids (r.1336-81) who revolted against the Ilkhanids and became rulers of Sabzawar thanks to the help of advocates of an itinerant darvish, Shakyh Khalifa. These advocates were mostly craftsmen and exhibited strong beliefs in the appearance of the *mahdi*. The jurists accused them of antinomian beliefs. For more information see “Sarbadārīds” *EF*² (Melville, C. P.) and Bashir, “Between Mysticism and Messianism,” 12-34; for connections between Sarbadārīds and futuwwa organizations see

bring relief to the world, tended to make use of sectarian language through which they separated their followers from the larger Muslim community as the real faithful.³⁴

It was around similar senses of devotion that various kings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries obtained complete dedication from their soldiers.³⁵ Moin compares the relationship between Timur and his soldiers to that of a Sufi shaykh and his devotees:

...soldiers had a bond with Timur much like that of a Sufi devotee's to his *pīr* or master. In their eyes, he was already a *qutb* (axis mundi) around whom the world revolved and a *qibla* (focus) upon whose image they would meditate. The devotion of these men toward Timur was tinged with

"Javānmardi" *Elr* (Mohsen Zakeri). Another messianic activity was that of the Musha'sha'a (founder Muḥammad b. Falāḥ, d. 866/1462) in lower Iraq. Muhammad b. Falah rose from among the Twelver Shi'ite community, however, made use of Sufi *dhikr* and other spiritual methods. He declared himself to be the veil of the twelfth imam and held beliefs akin to *tanasukh*. The movement became militarily active after gaining acceptance among some Arab tribes in the southern Iraq. "Musha'sha'" *El²* (P. Luft) and Bashir, "Between Mysticism and Messianism," 35-45. There were also specific developments within the Kubrawi Sufi order culminating in the proclamation of messiahship by Muhammad Nūrbakhsh (d. 1464). Regarding these developments within Kubrawiyya, see Marjani Molé, "Les Kubrawiya entre Sunnisme et Shiisme au huitième et neuvième siècles de l'hégire, *Revue des Études Islamiques* 29 (1961): 61-142; S. Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakhshiyya Between Medieval and Modern Islam*, University of South Carolina Press, 2003. Hurūfīs (founder Fadlallah Astarabadi, ex. 796/1394) emerged heralding advent of a new age and proclaiming full divinity of the founder, Fazlallah. It was also in this timeframe and geography that *Ahl-i Ḥaqq* emerged as a separate cult among the Iranians. *Ahl-i Haqq* refers to a secret religion prevalent mainly in western Iran. Its exact date of formation is not exactly known, however, the sect is believed to have taken its present form during the fifteenth century based on the most viable chronology presented in a sixteenth-century document. (Bashir, "Between Mysticism and Messianism," 61, 71-3, relying on Mohammad Makri, "Étude d'un titre de propriété du début du XVI siècle provenant du Kurdistan," *Journal Asiatique* 251 (1963), 229-56). The primary doctrine of the Ahl-i Ḥaqq relates to successive manifestations of the divine being. The process is likened to the divine being putting on garments and appearing in the form of human being. 'Ali is believed to have been one of these manifestations (*zuhūr*); however, he is not the primary figure of the sect. Their belief in *tanasukh* is reminiscent of the Shi'ite *ghulāt*, yet stands apart as it presumes the soul reaching perfection in 1001 cycles. For more information, see "Ahl-i Ḥaqq" *El²* (V. Minorsky); "Ahl-e Ḥaqq" *Elr* (H. Halm); Bashir, "Between Mysticism and Messianism," 60-73.

³⁴ By sectarian language, I am pointing out a frame of mind, which distinguishes fundamentally between those who have reached certain spiritual knowledge and those who have not. In this era, some critical forms of spiritual distinction appear. For instance, see this quote from 'Ali Hamadāni (d. 786/1385), the Kubrawi Shaykh who exerted significant impact on Nūrbākhsh. "...only those human beings who have earned spiritual perfection deserve to be called human. The remaining biologically human population is a part of the animal world and is actually lower than other animals since base humanity is the only species to be led astray by Satan." Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, 124.

³⁵ For a classical study of rulers defining their reign in apocalyptic terms in the sixteenth century, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Turning the Stones Over: Sixteenth-century Millenarianism from the Tagus to the Ganges," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 40, no. 2 (2003): 129-61. Also see Cornell Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân," in *Suleyman the Magnificent and His Time: Acts of the Parisian Conference, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 7-10 March, 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1990).

ghuluww (exaggeration), that is, a tendency to treat the spiritual guide as divine.³⁶

Thus, again in the words of Moin, we are talking about a “strange” age when saints and kings rivaled for the status of the divine savior³⁷ who was often modeled on the heroic character of ‘Ali, the son in-law of the prophet.³⁸

Thus, fourthly, a specific form of religiosity emerged depicting ‘Ali as the spiritual and military head of the Islamic community. This ‘Alid devotion pervaded different strands of the society, and became manifested in various kinds of rituals within the fraternal circles of ‘Alid piety and loyalty.³⁹ These fraternal circles were deeply engraved into the guilds of craftsmen as well as the military structures of chivalric Turkoman. These two social networks, *akhīs*⁴⁰ and *ghāzis*,⁴¹ were twin structures of the Sufi spiritual circles and were the main agents in ensuring the success of these mystic-messianic movements. Safavids, for instance, who proved to be the most successful one among

³⁶ Moin, 34.

³⁷ Moin, 160.

³⁸ ‘Ali being the son-in-law of the prophet was held as the head of the prophet’s descendants. For more information see, “Ahl al-Bayt, Āl al-Bayt” *EF*² (I. Goldziher). For more information on the significance of the *sayyids* (descendants from the family of the prophet) for the messianic activity of the time see, Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, 35-6; for their importance in futuwwa circles see, Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 205-6.

³⁹ For a detailed and insightful description of this development see Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 140-189.

⁴⁰ Akhi organizations flourished in Anatolia during the 13th and 14th centuries in relation with the *futuwwa*. Signifying codes of behavior for a mature man, *futuwwa* referred to various organizations formed around craftsmen guilds, which became quite widespread in Islamic lands. See “Futuwwa” *EF*² (Cl. Cahen); “Javānmardi” *Elr* (Mohsen Zakeri); Bernard Lewis, “The Islamic Guilds,” *The Economic History Review* 8/1 (1937), 20-37 (this article underlines the *Batini* background of the structure); for the way it was understood as a Sufi code of behavior see Ibn al-Husayn al-Sulami, *The Way of Sufi Chivalry (Kitab al-Futuwwa)* (Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1983); Muahmmad Ja‘far Mahjub, “Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism,” in *The Heritage of Sufism*, I, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 549-81; “Lloyd Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: A History of Sufi-futuwwat in Iran* (NY: Routledge, 2010); for the Turkish guilds see “Akhī” *EF*² (F. Taeschner); A. Gölpınarlı, “İslam ve Türk İllerinde Fütüvvet Teşkilatı ve Kaynakları,” *İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 11, nos. 1-4 (1949-50): 3-354; G. G. Arnakis, “Futuwwa Traditions in the Ottoman Empire: Akhis, Bektashi Dervishes and Craftsmen,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953): 232-47; D. A. Breebaart, “The Fütüvvet-nāme-i Kebīr. A Manual on Turkish Guilds,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 15, no. 1/2 (1972): 203-15.

⁴¹ *Ghāzis* signify militarymen who fight with a sense of religious mission for the expansion of Islamic lands. Groups known as “*Ghāziyān-i Rūm*” played important roles in the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. Later similar fervor would help the Safavids expand their realm. See “*Ghāzi*” *EF*² (I. Mēlikoff).

these, relied on the support of these two social groups as well as the spiritual authority inherited through their Sufi line of authority.⁴²

The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals became imperial entities at a time when these religiosities were engrained within different layers of the Islamic society. Each of these empires had to make use of, control, and then eventually struggle with these specific forms of religious devotion. In case of the Ottoman state, as it rose from a petty tribal chiefdom to a complex bureaucratic empire between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, religious loyalties became more and more bureaucratized.⁴³ The ways in which Sufi brotherhoods and saints functioned were not immune to this development. The imperial bureaucracy infiltrated through the Sufi networks by such high levels of institutionalization that even activities of groups of wandering, antinomian dervishes were regularized to some degree.⁴⁴ Thus the evolution of the Bayrami-Malāmiyya occurred under these restricting conditions of the Ottoman Empire.

Regarding the *Malāmi* Title

⁴² Babayan, 174.

⁴³ See Green, 132 for an evaluation of this process.

⁴⁴ Green, 134.

This section provides a survey of the use of the concept of *malāmat*⁴⁵ in Bayrami-Malāmi writings and asserts that the earliest writings and inscriptions belonging to the Order indicate that they understood themselves simply as Bayramis.

In the sixteenth century, Pir Ali Dede was referred as a Bayrami shaykh in the *Mir'ātu'l- 'ishk* as well as on his gravestone. Hakiki in the *Irshadname* used the term *malāmat* once urging the followers to refrain from blame inducing behavior; and thus designated a negative connotation to the term, not a positive one. *Mir'atu'l- 'ishk* referred to the term in the same vein. *Oğlanlar seyhi* Ibrahim Efendi did not use the title “Melami” for the group and never discussed the concept of *malāmat* in the *Sohbetname*, although he recognized that the real believers of God’s oneness were destined to be reproached by the general public.

⁴⁵ The concept of *malāmat* springs from the Arabic root *l.w.m.* indicating blame and reproach. Therefore, *malāmāti/malāmi* literally means the one who calls reproach upon himself/herself. In the third century of Islam, the term came to signify a group of people with a specific set of morals in Khurasan. The foundation of this movement has been attributed to Hamdūn al-Kassār (d. 271/884), together with Abu Hafs al-Haddād (d. 260/ ca. 873) and Abū ‘Uthmān al-Hīrī (d. 298/ca. 910). Recent publications on the Malāmātiyya agree on the intrinsic inward-looking piety of the original movement. Chabbi, Sviri, Algar, and Karamustafa agree that the Malāmātī spirituality emerged in a distinct form and later became woven under the rubric of Sufism, which was originally based in Baghdad. Accordingly, *malāmāti* fathers regarded all outward appearances of piety or religiosity, including good deeds, as ostentation.⁴⁵ Therefore the *malāmāti* made a point of renouncing all deeds that will attract positive attention from the public and gain him a good title. He also made a point of renouncing special clothing that indicated spiritual attainment, chose to make a living relying on simple daily jobs at the market rather than living in seclusion. Behind all this was the desire to conceal any display of spiritual attainment. For information on the Malāmātiyya, see “Malāmātiyya” El² (H. de Jong; Hamid Algar); Jacqueline Chabbi, “Remarques sur le développement historique des mouvements ascétiques et mystiques au Khurasan” in *Studia Islamica* 46 (1977), 32-4, 53-7; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, ii, 457; A. Karamustafa, *Sufism The Formative Period*, 48-51, 161-5; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions of Islam*, 86-8; Sara Sviri, “Hakim Tirmidhi and Malamati Movement in Early Sufism”, in *The Heritage of Sufism*, I, 583-613; Morris S. Seale, “The Ethics of Malamatiya Sufism and the Sermon on the Mount” *Muslim World* 58/1 (1968). Sulami’s (d. 412/1021) *Risalat al-Malāmātiyya* is commonly accepted to be the earliest detailed source on Khurasanian malāmatis. (Abū ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī, *Risālat al-Malāmātiyya*, ed. Abu ‘l-‘Alā’ ‘Afīfī in his *al-Malāmātiyya wa ‘l-taṣawwuf wa-ahl al-futuwwa*, Cairo 1945, 71-120 (for an analysis of this text, see R. Hartmann, *As-Sulamī’s Risālat al-Malāmātīja*, in *Der Islam* 7 [1918], 157-203).

On the other hand, as a mode of religiosity, the *malāmātī* behavior appeared in interesting ways in the Bayrami-Malāmi historiography. In line with this worldview, Bayrami-Malāmis distinguished themselves by refusing to don Sufi clothing, reside in Sufi lodges, and accept funds from the courtly families. The concept of *malāmat* appears in the poetry of Ismail Maşuki as well, the young Bayrami-Malāmi *pīr* who was executed in 945/1539. “Renounce the good name and the sign, wear the cloak of *malāmat* / For many *sultans* (read: saints) are hidden under this cloak of *malāmat*.”⁴⁶ It is questionable, however, if one can make much of this usage, because the expression “wearing the cloak of *malāmat*” appears in the poetry of Nesimi before him⁴⁷ and is a well-known expression in Anatolian Sufi literature.

It is only in the writings of a relatively late figure, Sarı Abdullah, that we see meaningful discussions of the concept of *malāmat* and detect its designation to this specific branch of Bayramis. In the *Semerat*, Sarı Abdullah explained that the Order was inflicted with various accusations because they belonged to the fold of the *malāmātī*, which he seemed to understand as the chosen ones among the saints. These accusations,

⁴⁶ *MM*, 50. “*Terkedup nām u nişāni giy melāmet hırkasın/ Bu melāmet hırkasında nice sultan gizlidir.*”

⁴⁷ Nesimi played an important role in the popularity of the *malāmātī* imagery in Turkish society. His ghazal continues to be quite popular even in modern times. “I myself have worn the cloak of *malāmat* on my back, And have crashed the bottle of virtue and honor, what is it to them?/Some days I go to the *madrassa* and read for God, Some days I go to the tavern and drink for love./ Some days I climb to the sky and watch the universe, Some days I descend to the earth and universe watches me./ Puritans called the wine of this love forbidden, I fill (the glass) and I drink, sin is mine, what is it to them?/ They have asked Nasimi are you pleased with your Beloved?/ Pleased or not, the beloved is mine, what is it to them?” It is possible that Hurufis had put forth their own understand of being a *malāmātī*. The Qur’anic verse 5:54, commonly cited in the discussion of the *malāmat*, contains the epithet of the Hurufi founder, Fadl-Allah (God’s favor). It is known that Hurufis were very cognizant of each Qur’anic referral to God’s *fadl*, perceiving them as referrals to the founder. Nevertheless, the Turkish translator of Fazlallah’s writings, Feristeoğlu provides a full translation of the verse, takes time to explain its meaning, and makes it clear that the verse refers to the community of the Hurufis. (See Ismail Arıkoğlu, “Feristeoğlu’nun Cavidan-name Tercümesi: ‘Isk-nāme (Inceleme-Metin)’” (PhD thesis, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, 2006), 178.)

he explained, were a way of driving people away from them, because God had such an intimate relationship with them that He was jealous of any attention they might get from the regular people. In the following years, Sarı Abdullah elaborated more on this thinking and focused on Ibn ‘Arabi’s (d. 638/1240) expositions regarding the *Malāmatiyya* in his *Futuhāt al-Makkiyya*. He collected the relevant passages in a single volume under the title of *Mir’at al-aṣfiya’ fī sifat malamatiyat al-aṣfiya’*. It was only after this point that Ibn ‘Arabi’s portrayal of the *malāmati*⁴⁸ became one of the main channels through which Bayrami-Malāmis explained their worldview.

Lalizade referred to the *Mir’at al-aṣfiya* in the very beginning of his treatise, urging those who are curious about the concept of *malāmat* to review this work. Mustakimzade followed Lalizade’s suit and referred to the Order as the Bayrami-Malāmiyya. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on the other hand, various Sufi compilers, mostly belonging to the third wave of the Melami tradition, further strengthened the association of the *Malāmati* title with the Order.

It is clear then that the group became known by the title “Melami” quite late, and not much importance should be attributed to it. I argue that it is rather through Sufi revolutionary networks of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that the world of Bayrami-Malāmis can be rightfully understood. In the following two sections, I will examine two

⁴⁸ Ibn ‘Arabi described the *Malāmatis* to be among the highest level of saints. On the other hand, he also associated them with the infidels (*kāfirūn*) who concealed their spiritual status in a similar manner. “The *kāfirun* are those who, as the *malāmiyya*, hide their spiritual station. They are the sowers who hide their seed in the earth.” (Cited in Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without Shore*, 50; also see idem, *Seal of the Saints*, 109-11; M. Chodkiewicz, “Les *Malāmiyya* dans la doctrine d’Ibn Arabi,” in *Melāmis-Bayrāmis*, 15-25.)

movements of this caliber and discuss the ways in which they made sense of the role of the saint and the messianic age.

Shaykh Bedreddin and The End of Days

During the fifteenth century, the revolt of Shaykh Bedreddin⁴⁹ (ex. 820/1416) exhibited some of the most astonishing features of the revolutionary activity of the time: Sufis of various sorts, discontented Christians, and *sipahis* (cavalrymen) coming together to search for a utopia on earth, based on communal sharing of possessions. Although many specifics remain to be answered on how these groups were able to come together and what their inspiration was for such political vision, several important studies have been conducted regarding Shaykh Bedreddin's identity and ideas.

Shaykh Bedreddin was an imminent Ottoman jurist who became attracted to the Sufi teachings later in life. He was born in Simavna, a town close to Edirne, to a *ghāzi* father and a Christian convert mother. His father had taken part in the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans, and had become the judge and ruler of the area that he had obtained from

⁴⁹ For more information on Bedreddin, see: "Badr al-Dīn b. Kādī ibn Simawna" *EF*² (Kissling, H. J.); "Bedreddin Simāv" *TDVIA* (Bilal Dindar); *ZM*, 136-201; A. Golpınarlı, *Simavna Kadıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin ve Manākıbı* (Istanbul: Milenyum Yayınları, 2008) -this book contains two of the primary sources for understanding Bedreddin: *Menākibnāme-i Shaykh Bedreddin* written by his grandson Khalil, and a Turkish translation of Bedreddin's *Wāridāt*; H. J. Kissling, "Das Menāqybnāme Scheich Bedreddin's, des Sohnes des Richters von Simāvnā," *ZDMG* 100 (1950): 112-76; Michel Balivet, *Seyh Bedreddin: Tasavvuf ve İsyân* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000). In "Zur Geschichte des Derwischordens der Bajramijje," Kissling discusses the close relationship between the early figures of Bayramiyya, Safaviyya, and the sympathizers of Shaykh Bedreddin. Parts of Bedreddin's *Wāridāt*, which some saw as a work of heresy, has been translated into English although heavily contextualized. Here Bedreddin is described to have been a *Malāmātī*: Badr al-Din Mahmud ibn Qadi Simawnah, *Inspirations on the Path of Blame*, trans. Tosun Bayrak (Vt.: Putney & Brattleboro, 1993).

the Greek. Bedreddin's early life was spent in the madrasa milieu gaining significant expertise on Islamic jurisdiction and classical Islamic sciences. Kissling describes his education in this manner:

He was taught the basis of Islamic religion and law by his father and, later on, by the jurists Yūsuf and Shāhidī. His subsequent studies took him to Bursa, in the company of his friend Mūsā Chelebi, better known as Kādīzāde-i Rūmī, a brilliant mathematician and astronomer. Up to 1381, he studied logic and astronomy in Konya under a certain Fayzallāh. After that, Bedreddin went to Jerusalem, where he worked under the otherwise not particularly well known Ibn al-ʿAṣkalānī (not the famous Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAskalānī), then he went to Cairo, attracted by the teaching of such famous scholars as Mubārakshāh al-Manṭikī, the physician Ḥājī Pasha, the philosopher and lawyer ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, and a certain ʿAbd Laṭīf. In about 1383, Bedreddin went on the pilgrimage to Mecca. After his return to Cairo, the Mamlūk sultan Barqūq appointed him as tutor to his son Faraj, who was to succeed him. By some fateful chance, Bedreddin met the Ṣūfī Shaykh Ḥusayn Akhlāṭī⁵⁰ at the Mamlūk court, and under his overpowering influence he (a former opponent of the Sufīs) himself accepted Sufism.⁵¹

After becoming a Sufī, Bedreddin led a reclusive life in Cairo for a while. Afterwards he took a journey to Tabriz around the year 1403.⁵² There he met and gained approval of Timur who was on his way back from the war in Anatolia. Bedreddin escaped Timur's attention by leaving abruptly and arrived back in Cairo where he became the successor of Husayn Akhlati. Some of the other disciples, however, disputed his succession, and Bedreddin left Cairo for Anatolia following a route through Palestine,

⁵⁰ The *Menākibnāme* notes that Husayn Akhlati was a *sayyid* and that he led Bedreddin into a deep trance when they first met. Bedreddin used to be against the Sufi way before this occasion.

⁵¹ "Badr al-Dīn b. Kādī ibn Simawna" *EF*² (H. J. Kissling).

⁵² Kissling explains this journey in terms of his attraction to the Safaviyya, while Ocak relates it to Bedreddin's ties with the Hurufiyya. (Kissling, "Bajramijje," 244; *ZM*, 158). I find the former explanation more plausible since Bedreddin establishes close ties with Bayramiyya and Khalwatiyya in Anatolia later on, the two orders which were closely associated with the Safaviyya. His attraction to Tabriz, on the other hand, underlines the importance of this city for revolutionary Sufi ideas.

Damascus, and Aleppo.⁵³ This journey, which at the end took him back to his hometown Edirne, was a long one and involved many stops at various points in Anatolia. It is possible that this journey served as the missionary basis for his open revolution later on.

Among the places Bedreddin stopped and spent time in Anatolia was the city of Konya⁵⁴ where he had been a madrasa student before. He was received eagerly in this city and was hosted by various prominent figures. Among these was Hamideddin Aksarayi, the founding father of the Bayramiyya, who was settled in Aksaray at the time and came to see him in Konya. It is reported that the two spent several days in seclusion together, an indication of their close association.⁵⁵

Afterwards Bedreddin traveled to western Anatolia and visited various cities. When he was in Izmir, he travelled to the island of Sakiz having been invited by its Christian residents. Bedreddin was able to find a common ground to convince the latter of his messiahship as the second Jesus. This conversation, the *Menakibname* tells us, was based on the calculations of astrology (*ha'yat*),⁵⁶ and that thanks to the miraculous acts of Bedreddin, some of the priests converted to Islam.

Moving north, Bedreddin travelled to Kütahya where he met with a group of *qalandars*⁵⁷ headed by Torlak Kemal.⁵⁸ These *qalandars*, *Menakibname* explains, repented at his hands and began to follow the Sufi path.

⁵³ According to the *Menākibnāme*, Bedreddin was received with great enthusiasm in Aleppo thanks to the Turkomans. A thousand of them gathered to welcome Bedreddin and suggested to build a *khanqah* for him, Bedreddin refused.

⁵⁴ Konya belonged to the Karamanis at the time. According to the *Menākibnāme* he converted some madrasa students to Sufism and met with the Karamani shah who became a disciple. (Gölpınarlı, 333-5)

⁵⁵ The *Menākibnāme* treats them as equals coming together to share a common word. (Gölpınarlı, 335-6) See the second chapter (second section) for the continual of the association between Bayramis and Bedreddinis.

⁵⁶ Gölpınarlı, 341.

⁵⁷ Qalandars were wandering dervishes who were known for their ecstatic antinomian behavior. For general information on qalandars and their place within the larger Sufi understanding see A. T. Karamustafa, *God's*

Following the route towards the north, Bedreddin travelled to Gelibolu and Bursa, and arrived at Edirne where his parents resided. In Edirne, he settled and led a quiet life for a while, even serving as the *kazasker*⁵⁹ for the Ottoman prince Musa. During the time, he also wrote a work of jurisprudence, which continued to be taught at Ottoman madrasas for several centuries. During the time, the Ottoman family was involved in a military feud between the brothers, and when his brother Mehmed defeated prince Musa, Bedreddin was forced to leave his position and was sent to Iznik to be kept in isolation. As Bedreddin was confined in this the town, Börklüce Mustafa and Torlak Kemal initiated their extensive rebellion in western Anatolia in 1416. On learning of the rebellion, Bedreddin left Iznik for Rumelia. When he arrived there, however, the forces of Mehmed I ambushed him.

After the rebellion of Börklüce Mustafâ and Torlak Kemâl had been most cruelly suppressed, the revolt in Rumelia also collapsed and Bedreddin was caught by troops of the Sultan and dragged to Serres in Macedonia, where Sultan Mehmed I was fighting the “false Muṣṭafâ.”⁶⁰ After a somewhat questionable trial, Bedreddin was publicly hanged as a traitor in Serres on 18 Dec. 1416. The role played by Bedreddin in this rising is still by no means clear. It is certain, however, that his ideology was in sympathy with it, and that his ideas did have an enduring influence. There is documentary evidence that there were followers of the Bedreddin movement in Rumelia even under Süleymân the Magnificent. After the

Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1550 (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); Simon Digby, “Qalandars and Related Groups.” In *Islam in Asia*, volume 1, ed. Y. Friedmann (Colorado: Magnes Press, 1984), 60-108. Regarding activities of qalandars in Anatolia during the Ottoman times see, “Kalenderiyye” *TDVİA* (Nihat Azamat); Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Marjinal Sûfilik: Kalenderiler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999); idem, “Kalenderi Dervishes and Ottoman Administration.” For interesting observations regarding a group of qalandari-type of darvishes in Aleppo and their transformation into settled Sufis, see Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, “Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, and the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 4 (Nov. 2005): 535-65.

⁵⁸ *Torlak* was a title used for qalandars in Anatolia at the time. See Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 6-7 and 66. Torlak Kemal is reported to have been a former Jewish convert and led around 2000 qalandar dervishes at the time of his uprising. (Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 131)

⁵⁹ This Turkish title in fact consists of two Arabic words (*Qāḍī*+*‘askar*). Meaning military-judge, it was one of the highest positions of the Ottoman judiciary system.

⁶⁰ Düzme Mustafa was leading an uprising based on the claim of his being the long last son of Bayezid I who had been imprisoned by the Timurid.

death of their hero, many of them turned to the now politically active Safaviyya, whilst others merged into sundry sects, especially the Bektāshīyya.⁶¹

Specifics of Bedreddin's trial are not known. He seems to have been hanged as a traitor, not a heretic (*zindiq*), because his possessions were not taken from the family.⁶² His mystical ideas were expounded in the *Waridat*, which attracted significant attention during the Ottoman times. Some saw it as a source of heresy while others commended it and wrote commentaries on the way it should be understood.⁶³ In modern scholarship, on the other hand, some scholars have found it disappointing that there is no mention of any social agenda or open messianic claims in it.⁶⁴

The *Waridat* consists of loosely arranged passages that are believed to have been notes taken by disciples as Bedreddin instructed them. It is in Arabic, which indicates the level of erudition, that Bedreddin and the disciple who was taking notes had in this language. In these notes, one can see various sorts of scholarship about which Bedreddin was knowledgeable. He explains how he understands certain passages from the Qur'an, criticizes various ideas belonging to the previous Islamic philosophers, and exhibits his learning in Islamic jurisprudence by responding to questions regarding subtle points of Islamic rituals. The *Waridat* is also laden with intimate recollections of Bedreddin's spiritual struggles and his endeavor to reach the ultimate mystical experience.

The *Waridat* has been regarded as a book of heresy by various figures throughout the Ottoman rule. This seems to have been related to the ideas Bedreddin held regarding the Divine Being and the hereafter. As far as we can detect from the *Waridat*, Bedreddin

⁶¹ "Shaykh Badr al-Dīn" *ET*².

⁶² *ZM*, 175-6.

⁶³ *Waridat* in its Arabic original form can be found in Bilal Dindar, "Şayh Badr ad-Din Mahmūd et ses Wāridāt." (PhD. Diss, Sorbonne University, 1975). My translations are from this text. Its Turkish translation can be found in Gölpınarlı, *Simavna Kadısıoğlu*, 131-80.

⁶⁴ Balivet, 33 and 109.

was a staunch believer in the doctrine of the oneness of being, *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and was quite familiar with Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings. The *Waridat* continually underlines the essential oneness surrounding the beings of the universe and provides numerous instances in which Bedreddin describes his endeavor to experience this unity. In one instance, he delineates the desired destination for the real Sufi in detail:

.... The furthest goal... is going through the instantaneous experiential oneness (*al-tawhīd al-ḥālī al-dhawqī*) ... during which the disciple (*sālik*) feels like he lost sensation, although he is not sleeping. He sees that his body (*jism*) expanded to the point of taking up the whole world. He sees the mountains, the streams, the trees, the gardens, and other things of the world (contained) in his own self; and he sees that he is identical with all being (*‘ayn al-kull*). Whatever he sees, he says “that is me,” and does not see anything that is other than himself. Whatever he looks at, he thinks that is him; and he sees the smallest particle and the sun (contained) in himself, and sees them as identical without being able distinguish between the two. He sees the time as one; there is no ‘before’ in it, or ‘after’, no beginning or end. He becomes surprised when he is told ‘this is the time of Adam’ and ‘this is the time of Muhammad,’ because he sees the extinction of the beginning and the end. He sees that the time does not change, and that all of it is contained in one moment (*ān wāhid*).⁶⁵

This kind of momentary experience, on the other hand, seems to have led Bedreddin to interpret the Qur’anic text in a symbolical way. This tendency is most apparent with regard to his belief in perpetuity, despite clear Qur’anic references pointing out to the transiency of the world. Blurring the line between this world and the next, Bedreddin explains, “... know that the cosmos (*kawn wa fasād*) is eternal (without beginning or end, *azalī wa abadī*); the world and the hereafter are relative (*i‘tibārī*). The outward form is called the temporary world, while the inward form is the eternal hereafter.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Dindar, 14.

⁶⁶ Dindar, 20

Following this way of thought, one of the most reiterated topics in the *Waridat* relates to the ignorance of the common folk who think that they will be resurrected in their worldly bodies after death. It also underlines that people will not be subjected to the occurrences of the afterlife in the way that they imagine. For him, all the descriptions in the Qur'an and the hadith regarding the everlasting reward (paradise) and punishment (hell), point out to figurative descriptions of states of knowledge and ignorance. He also indicates that the reality of re-fashioning of the human being is something only the elect among the saints truly understand.⁶⁷

Bedreddin also employs this symbolical approach to various apocalyptic accounts in the prophetic tradition.⁶⁸ In the *Waridat*, some of the basic features of the apocalypse are inverted and described to occur in symbolical ways:

During the time of the prophet, some people awaited for the appearance of the *Dajjāl*,⁶⁹ and expected that occurrences of the resurrection (*qiyāmat*) would take place during their lifetimes. Their expectation is well known and written in the books. In later times, some others waited for the resurrection to happen in their life times and wrote books about it. Some said it would happen after the year 800/1397, some said after 700/1297. They also said the Mahdi and the seal of the saints (*khātim al-Awliya*) would appear between 700 and 800 H/ 1300-1400. However, more than 800 years passed since the time of the prophet and none of the things that the common folk (*āwām*) expected happened. Another thousands of years will pass and none of the things they expect will happen.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Dindar, 1.

⁶⁸ Islamic notion of the apocalypse corresponds to the fundamental doctrine of resurrection (*qiyāmat*) and applies to eschatological speculation concerning the return of the dead, the Day of Judgment, the process of salvation and damnation, and their complex realizations at the end of time (*ākhir al-zaman*). In a broader sense it also encompasses preparatory events preceding the resurrection including the advent of the Mahdi (the [divinely] guided, the Islamic messiah), and the ultimate triumph of the forces of Islam over disbelief. For various aspects of the Islamic discussions of the apocalypse see: Said Amir Arjomand, "Messianism, Millennialism, and Revolution in Early Islamic History," in *Imagining the End: Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Magnus Bernhardsson (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 106-125; David B. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, N. J., 2002); idem, "Moral Apocalyptic in Islam," *Studia Islamica* 86, no. 2 (1997): 37-69; Abbas Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009).

⁶⁹ *Dajjāl* is the antichrist of the Muslim accounts of apocalypse, expected to appear right before the Mahdi.

⁷⁰ Dindar, 25-6. Bedreddin also diverged from the Islamic belief regarding the emergence of Jesus for a second time before the end of the world. He believed that Jesus had died in the cross, and the Mahdi would

Thus Bedreddin clearly rejects the mainstream Islamic portrayal of the apocalypse, understanding it in completely different terms. In some copies of the *Waridat*, this explanatory note follows the above-given passage: “According to the notables (*akābir*), the resurrection is the manifestation of the Divine Essence and the end of the dominion of the attributes (*ẓuhūr al-dhāt wa-inqirāḍ ṣaltanat al-ṣifāt*).” This note seems to have emerged from the *Waridat* as well, evidenced by the following passage in which Bedreddin interprets a Qur’anic verse concerning the apocalypse symbolically and explains how he thinks the resurrection should be understood:

God has said in the *Sūra* of Tāhā: “They will ask you about the mountains (on the day of resurrection), say, ‘My Lord will reduce them to dust, and leave them as bare flatland in which you see no ups and downs.’ ”⁷¹ It is possible that this verse points out to the complete manifestation of the Divine Essence (*ẓuhūr al-Dhāt*), spread of oneness (*tawhīd*) during the end of the days. The dominion (*ḥukm*) will belong to the Divine One (*al-Dhāt*) who is devoid of unevenness (*‘iwaj*). The governance (*ṣaltanat*) of the attributes -signified as the mountains in the verse- will disappear, and the Possessor of Time (*sāhib al-zamān*) will be the locus of manifestation for the sheer oneness (*al-tawhīd al-ṣīrf*) and will call people to it.⁷²

In this passage, Bedreddin seems to be pointing out to the idea that the Mahdi, signified here as the Possessor of Time (*sāhib al-zamān*), will openly proclaim the mystical divine oneness and identify himself with it.⁷³ This might mean that he will be

carry out his mission only symbolically. See the account of his dream that included a vision of Jesus’ dead body in hands of two men dressed in green. (Dindar, 16).

⁷¹ Q 20:105-6. Translation is from Fakhry, 196.

⁷² Dindar, 22-3.

⁷³ This idea might become more understandable in the light of various Sufi writings belonging to the thirteenth century. See an interesting discussion of the messianic background behind Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings in Gerald T. Elmore, “The Millennial Motif in Ibn al-‘Arabi’s “Book of the Fabulous Gryphon,” *Journal of Religion* 81, no. 3, 410-37. Also see Hamid Algar’s observations regarding Aziz Nasafi’s (d. ca. 1281) perception of the Mahdi “...Nasafi shared in the calendrically inspired expectations that were rife at the time. Now, the *Kashf al-ḥaqā’iq*, as its very title indicates, is meant to serve precisely as an unveiling of the inner truths that will be fully and definitively disclosed when the *Ṣāhib al-zamān*, that is, the Twelfth Imam

able to lead people to the full experience of the monistic plenitude of existence.⁷⁴ In some way, Bedreddin seems to have believed that such an experience will be more available to the people in general, which will enable them to see the world from a new angle. It is likely that he wished this development to bring changes to the way people are governed, as they begin to have a completely different vision regarding themselves and the divine. Thus, it seems, we are faced with a specific form of Sufi vision where the mystical experience tends to be leading towards a political utopia.

Accordingly, the *Waridat*'s significance lies in providing us with a picture of an apocalyptic vision that seems to have been implemented within the Sufi milieu of the fifteenth century. It is quite likely that Bedreddin was not the inventor of these ideas, but relied upon an existent Sufi conception of the time. It is also possible that especially *qalandari* dervishes were inclined to this form of symbolical interpretation of the apocalypse.

who is also the Seal of the Saints, finally emerges. When that happens, Nasafi writes in his *Maqṣad-i Aqṣā*, the cultivation of exoteric knowledge in the madrasas will come to an end, and instead "truths (*ḥaqā'iq*) will be discussed there." ["Kobrawiya, ii" *Elr* (Hamid Algar)]. Nurbakhsh's messianic message exhibited similar ideas. Thus believed Nurbakhsh, the mahdi's knowledge lifted the veils from the esoteric secrets of the cosmos that had hitherto been a preserve of the spiritual elect such as prophets and great saints (*awliyā'*). Bashir explains that among Nurbakhsh's adherents, it was held that Mahdi was set to appear at a special time in world history. At this specific time, the enlightened would know that the spiritual truths hidden so far were to become apparent and Mahdi was understood to be the agent of this final complete unveiling of the truths. It is also significant that Nurbakhsh could not make sense of the Twelver Shi'ite position with regard to restricting the number of imams to twelve and held that this was a misleading imitation since prophets and imams could appear in the body of the saint. (Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, xx, and 102-3.)

⁷⁴ For a general discussion of Sufi perception of the apocalypse, see Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (NY: Paulist Press, 1996), 43-5. Here Sells provides this insight: "From the beginning of Sufi literature, there was a growing tendency to bring the mystical encounter close to, even parallel to, the eschatological encounter- without ever collapsing the two. The reality revealed in the tearing of the veil lies from one point of view in the future, in the "after," but in much of Sufism it also resides within or behind the present moment as an "eternal now." Is it possible that such a collapse (of the mystical encounter with the eschatological one) had occurred in the minds of Sufis with messianic tendencies during this time? It seems that similar tendencies are to be found in the late Ottoman Sufi, Niyāzī-i Misrī (d. 1105/ 1694), who was a devout admirer of the *Wāridāt*. See the latter's perception of the apocalypse in conjunction with mystical experience as discussed by Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyāzī-i Misrī (1618-1694)" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1999), 378-9.

While the *Waridat* does not provide any more details regarding the perception of the end of the days, we are able to trace similar ideas in sources belonging to various other movements that emerged in Iran around the same time. The Hurufiyya is a significant one among those and their more detailed stories will be provided in the following section.

Hurufis and the Apocalypse: Man as the Locus of the Divine

Among the messianic movements that emerged in the fourteenth century was the Hurufiyya, which has often been defined as a heretic sect.⁷⁵ Hurufi writings, on the other hand, regard Hurufis as the true believers and the rightful interpreters of the Qur'an. Fazlallah, the founder of the Hurufiyya, urges the followers to commit to the Qur'an and the hadith in their sayings and not report anything that is not based on one of those. Followers are, in fact, likened to an exemplary Muslim community that follows the

⁷⁵Studies on Hurufiyya and its founder include: "Hurufiyya," *EF*² (A. Abusani); "Faql Allah Hurufi," *EF*² (A. Gölpınarlı); "Horufism," *EIr* (H. Algar); "Jāvdān-nāma," *EIr* (Orkhan Mir Kasimov); E.G. Browne, "Some Notes on the Literature and Doctrine of the Hurufi Sect," *JRAS* (1898): 61-94; idem, "Further Notes on the Literature of the Hurufis and Their Connection with the Bektashi Order of Dervishes," *JRAS* (1907), 533-81; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Hurufilik Metinleri Kataloğu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1973); Hamid Algar, "The Hurufi Influence on Bektashism," In *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groups relevant de Hadji Bektach*, ed. Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (Istanbul: Les Éditions Isis, 1995), 39-54; H. T. Norris, "The Hurufi Legacy of Fadlullah of Astarabad," in *The Legacy of Persian Sufism II*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 87-97; S. Bashir, "Deciphering the Cosmos from Creation to Apocalypse: the Hurufiyya Movement and Medieval Islamic Esotericism," in *Imagining the End: Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America*, ed. A. Amanat and M. Bernardsson (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 168-84; Idem, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005); idem, "Enshrining Divinity: The Death and Memorialization of Fazlallah Astarābādī in Hurufi Thought," *The Muslim World* 90, nos. 3-4 (2000): 289-308; Ismail Arıkoğlu, "Ferişteoğlu'nun Cavidanname Tercümesi" (PhD diss., Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, 2006); Fatih Usluer, *Hurufilik* (Istanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2009); Ocak, *Zindıklar ve Mulhidler*, 130-35.

middle way as featured in the Qur'an (2:143, *ummatan wasaṭan*).⁷⁶ Reliance upon the Qur'an is apparent and Hurufi works abound with quotes from the Qur'an; however they are interpreted in unique ways, signified by an obsession over letters and certain numbers that are seen as gateways to greater truths. It was this obsession that gained them the title Hurufiyya (letterists).

The founder was known as Fazlallah (Faḍl Allah, “favor of God”), and was from the city of Astarabad, a city on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea in Iran. His father being the head judge of the city, Fazlallah was born into a well-versed family and received a traditional Islamic training. After losing his father at a young age, Fazlallah inherited his judge’s job. At the age of eighteen, however, he went through his first extraordinary experience upon hearing a wandering dervish recite these verses from Rumi: “Why fret over death, when you have the essence of eternity? / How can the grave contain you, when you have the light of God?” When he inquired about the meaning of the verse, he was told that it could only be learned experientially and decided to attempt this experiential path himself.

One year after this experience, Fazlallah left Astarabad in the dark of the night and became a wandering dervish. In his journey throughout Iran and beyond, he made a pilgrimage at Mecca, visited some of the most important cities of the time (Isfahan, Kharazm, Sabzavar, Tabriz, and Baku) and established a legacy of his own. Dreams, it seems, was a big part of this legacy—he was constantly experiencing dreams which

⁷⁶ Arıkoğlu, 167. (Arıkoğlu’s transliteration of Ferishteoğlu’s ‘Ishknāme, a Turkish rendition of Fazlallah’s various works, serves as one of the primary source for this section. The pages given here point out to the transliterated text, therefore the original form of ‘Ishknāme. Ferishteoğlu (d. 864/1469) was a proclaimer of Ḥurūfī teaching in Anatolia, authoring a couple of Ḥurūfī books which remained quite popular throughout the Ottoman times. He was rumored to be a disciple of ‘Alī al-‘Āla, although other versions of his involvement with Ḥurūfī teachings are existent (for a discussion, see Algar, “The Ḥurūfī Influence on Bektashism,” 48; also see “Firishte-oghlu” *EF*² (Ömer Faruk Akün).

pointed to his distinct disposition and mission; while in the meantime, he was interpreting dreams of others who in return admired him for his skills.

He was able to establish two levels of devotion for himself: firstly, he had a dedicated circle of devotees who abandoned their belongings and led a simple community life with him in Toqci (in Isfahan); secondly, he had prominence among the members of the elite (scholars, *sāda*,⁷⁷ ministers, military and administrative officers, and people of wealth) who sought him for dream interpretations.⁷⁸ Fazlallah was deeply influenced by Sufism but could not be called a Sufi in the traditional sense. He did not become part of a Sufi community nor adhered to a specific *silsila*. Although being an ascetic wanderer, he did not don the Sufi attire.⁷⁹ Unlike many mystics of the time, he did not make use of music and dance. His community in Toqci supported themselves by their own work, mostly manual in nature (Fazlallah himself was a maker of hats), and refused donations and gifts.⁸⁰ There was no fixed *wird*, no open *dhikr*, but rather a communal sharing of the spiritual teachings of Fazlallah.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Fazlallah, proclaimed himself to be a *sayyid* in the same manner with the founders of Musha'sha'a and Nurbakhshiyya, and later the Safavids. see Bashir, *Messianic Hopes, Mystical Visions*, 35-6. Most devotees of Fazlallah also stand out by the title *sayyid*.

⁷⁸ Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and Hurufis*, 15-6.

⁷⁹ There is information that Fazlallah changed clothes with a shepherd when he first left his hometown. This kind of clothing might have become the norm for Ḥurūfs later on. Fazlallah was known for his white felt cloak and white hat (*takke*) (Usluer, 40). Nesīmi mentions he wears *kepenek* (a woolen cloak or wrapper without sleeves or collar usually worn by shepherds) with great pride. Adil Ali Atalay (ed.), *Seyyid Nesimi Divanı* (Istanbul :Can Yayinlari, 2009),169-70. "Because Nesīmi became a *kepenek*-wearer thanks to Fazl/ He found the heaven, the *huri*, and the beloved in the *kepenek*." Sufi headdress and cloak (*khirqā*), on the other hand, is criticized severely in his poetry. "The work of the Sufi is a disavowal of love,/ His dervish cloak is an idol, his beads are monkish gear." Burrill, 152. Karamustafa notes some qalandars also wore the same cloak. See *God's Unruly Friends*, 63.

⁸⁰ "Ḥurūfiyya" *EL*² (A. Bausani).

⁸¹ Norris, "The Ḥurūfī Legacy," 92.

In the mean time, Fazlallah's own theology and self-image evolved to the point that he acknowledged to being the Messiah⁸² and having received a comprehensive revelation of esoteric knowledge which included the symbolic meanings of the letters of the Persian-Arabic alphabet. This revelation marked the beginning of a new era where the real knowledge regarding the human being was disclosed. At first, he made this proclamation to his close circle devotees. Seven (or eight) close confidants who pledged their allegiance to Fazlallah at this point were to play a significant part in the later propagation of his message.

The open proclamation of the message, which portrayed Fazlallah as the full manifestation of the divine and harbored the beginning of a new era, seems to have occurred around 1386/7. The occasion was known as the "Manifestation of Divine Glory" (*zuhūru kibriyā'*) among the followers. Around this time, Fazlallah also penned his most significant work, *Javidanname* (*Letter of Eternity*), which set forth the distinctive doctrines of Hurufism. During the years between the proclamation and his execution, Fazlallah spent most of his time around today's Azerbaijan: Tabriz and Baku, it seems, were extremely important cities for the movement. It was also in this area (Alinjaq-Nahjevan) where he was imprisoned by Timur's son Miranshah and executed a few days

⁸² Ferishteoğlu reiterates Fazlallah's messiahship quite often and bases it on several qualifications. (Arikoğlu, 44, 79-83: "*Bāb fī ma'rifat livā al-ḥamd*," and others) In this regard, he associates Fazlallah with Isa (Jesus) based on the hadith: "*Lā mahdī illā Isa wa'l mahdī min awlād Fatima*." Fazlallah's being a *sayyid* is underlined in accordance with this portrayal. Another prophetic account foreseeing Messiah's appearance from Khurasan is also stated. The hadith indicating Jesus' age to be thirty-three around the time of his descent is interpreted in Hurūfī context and related to Fazlallah's receiving the knowledge of *ta'wil* when he was at that age. In a similar vein, signs of the apocalypse are also described to have taken place based on a symbolic reading of them. Significance of the year 800 is also detected, some Hurūfīs underlining Fazlallah appeared in the eighth century of the Islamic calendar (Usluer, 373-4) See an account of symbolic reading of apocalypse in Bashir's *Fazlallah Astarabadi and Hurufis*, 82-3. Also see Usluer, 369-73 for an account of Fazlallah's messiahship.

later (796/1394) in accordance with fatwas of a number of scholars.⁸³ This execution was followed by a series of other executions in Iran and neighboring lands, which Hurufi adherents visited in the hopes of expanding their circle.⁸⁴

In modern scholarship, the Hurufiyya has been linked to the Shi'i *ghulāt*,⁸⁵ as well as to Kabbalism and other forms of letter-symbolism in Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions. At times, it has wrongly been associated with the well-known Islamic letter calculation system, *abjad*,⁸⁶ of which it barely made use. The primary aim for Hurufis, it seems, was underlining God's full manifestation in the material world by making use of specific numbers (7, 14, 28, 32), which were produced based on a specific interpretation of Arabic and Persian letters. The number seven, being a highly symbolic number in pre-Islamic and Islamic times, represented for the Hurufis the number of verses in the *Fatiha*, the opening chapter of the Qur'an. Its double, the number fourteen, was specifically important being the number of *hurūf al-muqatta'a*, the mystery letters which appear in the beginning of various chapters of the Qur'an. Fourteen was also the equivalent of the word "*wajh*" (face) in *abjad* calculations, and *wajh* was a significant concept for the Hurufis in a similar way with the Sufis, who underlined the Qur'anic verse 55:26-7 in order to explain the transcendent essence of God in every being. The number twenty-eight, the double of fourteen, was also significant because it was the total number of

⁸³ "Horufism" *Elr* (H. Algar). Hurūfī sources mention a certain Shaykh Ibrahim who gave the authorization of his execution. Other sources mention that *ulama* meetings were held in Gilan and Semerkand to discuss his ideas and they also ended with demand for his death.

⁸⁴ See "Horufism" *Elr* (H. Algar). At first, Hurūfīs had amicable relations with the Karakoyunlu rulers of Tabriz and were able to yield some effect on them. The situation changed in 845/1441 when some five hundred Hurūfīs were immolated marking the end of Hurūfī activity in this city.

⁸⁵ See the discussion in Algar, "The Hurūfī Influence," 51-2. He concludes that although similarities exist with *ghulāt* and 'Isma'ilī forms of Shi'ism, Hurūfīyya should be regarded as an offshoot of Sufism, not Shi'ism.

⁸⁶ For *abjad*, the system of assigning numerical values for each letter of the Arabic alphabet, see "Abdjad" *EF*² (Weil, G.)

letters in the Arabic alphabet. Although highly regarded for being the language of the Qur'an, Arabic was seen somewhat deficient in comparison to Persian. The latter contained four additional letters (reaching to the number thirty-two) and represented the new era in which secrets of the Qur'an would be revealed.

In the sense that they understood the creation as God's unfolding into the abodes of the cosmos and recognized love as playing a significant role in this unfolding, Hurufis were very much in tune with certain teachings of Sufism. Algar acknowledges that and considers Hurufiyya as "a decadent and fantastic form of Sufism."⁸⁷ He also points to Kubrawi shaykh Sa'ad ad-Din Hammuya's *Misbah al-Tasawwuf* as a forerunner for Hurufi obsession with letters.⁸⁸ Hurufis, however, seem to have taken sporadic Sufi claims to divinity, which were explained away as feats of ecstasy, to several notches higher and founded a system of thought that admitted the intrinsic divinity within the human being. The degree to which they focused on the engraftment of divinity within the human body rather than the human soul seems to have been the most blasphemous point of their teaching.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ "Iran, ix. Religions in Iran, (2) Islam in Iran (2.2) Mongol and Timurid Periods" *Elr* (H. Algar).

⁸⁸ "Kobrawiyya, ii" *Elr* (H. Algar). Kubrawi connection with Hurufi ideas are also indicated by Böwering. See "Deylamī Šams al-Dīn Al-Dīn Abū Ṭābet Moḥammad" *Elr* (G. Böwering). "Deylamī bridged the gap in 12th century Sufism between 'Ayn al-Qudāt Hamadānī (d. 526/1131) and Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, foreshadowing ideas that emerged in the Kubrawi school and the Hurufi sect." Algar's connection with Sa'd ad-Din Hammuya seems reliable, as Aziz Nasafi, a disciple of the latter, also features some interest in numbers 14 and 28. See Ridgeon, *Persian Metaphysics and Mysticism*, 135.

⁸⁹ Despite overall Sufi concentration on the human soul, there were currents that attributed much significance to the human body, specifically the human face. Those who emphasized a specific doctrine of love (*ishq*) beginning with Ahmad Ghazali (d. 1126) seem to have been most inclined to this kind of interpretation. (see this article on the distinction of Ahmad Ghazali's love theory from the previous Sufi interpretations of love: Joseph E.B. Lumbard, "From *Ḥubb* to *ʿIshq*: The Development of Love in Early Sufism," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18, no. 3 (2007), 345-85.) Believers of this love theory were also known to be the ones who practiced *shahid-bazi* (erotico-spiritual contemplation of the human body); a practice, for the opponents, was not much different from claiming *ḥulūl* (God's taking residence in human body). For more information on mystic figures who employed *shahid-bazi* see: Jim Wafer, "Vision and Passion: The Symbolism of Male Love in Islamic Mystical Literature," in *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature: Culture, History, and Literature*, ed. Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe (NY: New York University Press, 1997), 107-30. How the human body was situated versus the human soul

complicated relationship between the divine speech and the materials of the universe. The materials were intrinsically woven with the sounds, not just as an abstract notion of being represented in voices and letters, but literally being imprinted with the letters, or being shaped after the shapes of letters.⁹³

The human being, representing the culmination of the universe and the most perfect form, was perceived to be able to feature these letters in their totality, and therefore, have the potential to be the prototype of God. This was especially true for those who have attained the truth about the true nature of God, the ones who had been freed from the compounds of death (*lā yadhūqūna al-mawt*),⁹⁴ by reaching the point that had been Fazlallah's goal in the beginning of his spiritual journey. Fazlallah was perceived to have accomplished this level in the fullest sense, and therefore Hurufis had no reticence in calling him names that could only be designated for God in Islamic vocabulary, which included the grandiose title of "the Lord of the universe" (*rabb al- 'ālam īn*).

dahi mecmu' kendi zātında 'ale's-seviyye goresin ki anlarda māzī ve mustakbel ve hāl yoktur. Hazret-i melik-i muta'āl u padişah-i lem-yezel u lā-yazālun sıfat-i kadīmidir ve zāt-i azimidir ve ba'dezan bu otuz iki kelime-i mucerrede zann ile tasavvur ile tahayyul ile ve tevehhum ile munkasim olmazlar; hazret-i ahadiyyetin zātiyla kā'imdir, zū'-i sems gibi ki sems ile zu'nun hakikati birdir ve rutubet gibi suyla ve odun harareti gibi odla. Ve dahi bu otuz iki kelime- lāhutiyye-i mucerrede gibi muhittir, mā-kān u mā-yakūn ve iki cihana muhittir; ezelī ve ebedīdir ki lā-yemūttur. Çünkü bir nefis-i kāmīl-i ādem ve Hudā-şinās kim kendi hilkatini otuz iki kelime-i ilāhi'nin ilmi gordu ve dahi kendi sıfatını bu otuz iki kelime-i ilāhının ilmi müşāhede etti, onun gibi kişi makām-i vuslata erdi. 'Wasalū wa ittasalū' makamına eristi ve dahi hazret-i ahadiyyetin zātına ve sıfatına vāsil oldu. 'Nor will they there taste death, except the first death.' (Q 44:56)'' Bashir tries to make sense of the teachings regarding the letters by making a distinction between the metalanguage and the materialized language. (*Fazlallah Astarabadi and Hurufis*, 68) I am not quite sure if the distinction always works.

⁹³ The creative process, for Hurūfis, seems to have been that of an emanation, during which the Divine fully pours itself into this cosmos in the form of letters. Although it is difficult to find description of the process in these clear terms, symbolism of it is evident. For instance, Hurūfis classified all material entities into three shapes that they believed was found in the letters. Any material entity could be broken down into a combination of straight, bent, and rounded forms of the *alif*, *lam*, and *ha* of the Arabic alphabet. Choosing these letters as the basis for the forms of the material universe was not coincidental; *alif*, *lam*, and *ha* formed the word Allah (God) once put together. (*Fazlallah Astarabadi and Hurufis*, 76.) Through many examples of this sort, Hurūfī works abound with the close identification of the material world with God.

⁹⁴ Q: 44:56; quoted in Arıkoğlu, 198.

Although this extravagant title says a lot regarding Fazlallah's imagery among his disciples, one should note that such high status was not only retained for him. It seems that the divinity resting in the human being was a generally accepted vision, each follower imagined his/her own self in similar terms.⁹⁵ Nesimi's poetry, for instance, is laden with claims of divinity for his own self, and Fazlallah is depicted as the person who has revealed this knowledge to him.⁹⁶ There are reports of Hurufis bending down before each other, admitting the full manifestation of God in the other.⁹⁷ The human being is the microcosm, the book of God, the goal and measure of things, the throne on which God ascended when He had finished creation of inferior and subordinate creatures (*'alā 'arshihi istawā* Q 20:5), and therefore an object of worship.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Making sense of this idea might be possible through Moezzi's reading of early Shi'ism, especially through his notes on the allusion of presence of imam in each initiated believer seems quite relevant. See imam Ja'far's reaction to a disciple who prostrated himself before him, in M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, trans. David Streight (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) 181, footnote 275. "...in being prostrate before me, you actually are prostrate before yourself.")

⁹⁶ Browne provides some examples from Nesimi's poetry portraying himself in divine terms, see "Some Notes," 80-81. "*Ey tālib-i sūret-i Hudāi/ Cun be-gozari ez dū-i Hudā-im*", "O seeker of the divine countenance, when thou quittest duality, we are god"; "*Cun onsekiz bin aleme oldu vucudum ayine / Ol suret-i rahman benim kim halka mestur olmusam*." "Seeing that my body is the mirror for the 18000 worlds, I am that very form of God, but am concealed to the multitude." (Browne, 71, with some changes in translation.) Various examples are also provided by Burrill through Nesimi's Turkish and Persian quatrains.. "Since from time without beginning, through all eternity, everlasting am I/ Both the creation and creator of "Be! And it was" am I/ Since at the feast of unity the cupbearer am I/ The signs and regions (*āyāt u āfāq*) of the souls am I." (Burrill, 198).

⁹⁷ See Browne, "Some Notes," 93, for an account from Latifi's *Tezkire* regarding the execution of the qalandari poet Temennāi for Hurūfī ideas (i.e. worshiping another human being) during the time of Bayezid I. Similar practices are found in Alevi and Bektashi circles in Turkey. Bayrami-Malāmis might have performed a similar practice in the light of a statement in Besir Aga's letter asking from followers to not bow down before each other, but exhibit the *shari'* model of hand-shaking (*musāfaha*) (Lalizade, 54). A strong opponent of Malāmis in the seventeenth century, Abdūlmecid Sivasi (d. 1049/1639) indicates in his *Durar al-'Aqāid* that this type of ritual was believed to have taken place in Malāmi circles. In Mustafa Kılıç, "Ebu'l-Hayr Abdūlmecid b. Muharrem es-Sivasi'nin Fatiha Tefsiri'nin Tahkiki," (Masters' Thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2005), 29.

⁹⁸ Browne, "Some Notes," 69. It should be noted that understanding human being as the microcosm was quite common in Sufi literature. Human being's description as the book of God, and his similitude to the Qur'an are also found. That the search for the divine will ultimately lead one to his/her own self is also expressed. Some of these ideas are summarized quite well in this quatrain from Najm ad-Din Rāzi (d.1256): "O you (man) who are the copy of the divine book/ You who are the mirror of Royal (divine) Beauty/ All that which exists in the world is not outside you/ Whatever you wish, seek it then in yourself; for you are it."

Hurufis substantiated the act of prostration (*sajda*) before the human being by referring to various passages in the Qur'an in which angels are asked to bow down before the first created human being, Adam.⁹⁹ According to these verses, when God wanted to create Adam as a vicegerent on earth, angels could not see the point in this wish. "Why would you like to create something that will corrupt the earth and spill blood?" they asked, "while we keep praising you continuously." God assured them that He knows what they did not know and created Adam. Then He taught him the "names," which signified the knowledge of the thirty-two letters for the Hurufis. After receiving this knowledge, Adam was put before the angels and was able to exhibit that his knowledge exceeded that of the angels. Then a divine command instructed the angels to bow down before Adam, which they did, with the exception of proud Satan who became an unbeliever and lost God's favor.

While the command for the angels to prostrate before Adam was downplayed in classical Islamic exegesis and was understood to be symbolic, Hurufis read it quite literally. Thus it was underlined that the prostration took place because the human being was created in the image of God. This image became apparent when the human being attained the knowledge of the thirty-two letters, since by this means he reached the status

Hermann Landolt, "Two Types of Mystical Thought in Muslim Iran: An Essay on Suhrawardī Shaykh al-Ishrāq and 'Aynulquzāt-i Hamadānī." *Muslim World* 68 (1978), 187.

⁹⁹ For general information on these verses (Q 2:30-34, 15:28-31, and 38:71-5) and how they were perceived by the Sufis, see Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 31-3. Sells' translation of the verses 2:30-34 is: "When your Lord said to the angels: 'I am going to place a regent (*khalīfa*) on the earth,' and they said: 'Will you place one there who will corrupt it and spill blood, while we recite your praises and exalt you?' He said: 'I know what you do not know', then he taught Adam all the names and showed everything to the angels, saying: 'tell me their names, if you are sincere.' They said: 'Praise be to you, we know only what you have taught us, you are the all-knowing, the most-wise.' He said: 'O Adam, tell them their names'. When he told them the names, he said: 'Did I not tell you that I know what is hidden in the heaven and earth, and know what you disclose and know what you hide?' Then we told the angels to bow down before Adam and they did, except for Iblis who was scornful and acted proud, and become an unbeliever." For more common Sufi interpretations of these verses, where Adam's spirit takes precedence over his body, see L. Bogdanov and V. Zhukovski "The Idea of Man and Knowledge in the Conception of Persian Mystics," *BSOAS* 6/1 (1930): 151-77.

of the primordial Adam. Thus the entire universe prostrated before him much like angels did before Adam. Those who refused to carry out this prostration before the human being, on the other hand, were likened to Satan. The latter, by refusing to bow down before Adam in the primordial time, had generated a perpetual community of kafirs—infidels who could not perceive the divine as manifested in the face of the human being. In this new definition of faith, believers were those who had recognized the truth within the human being, and infidels were those who obstinately refused to see it.¹⁰⁰

The engraving of the image of God within the human being was also underpinned through two hadiths, which appear quite often in the *'Ishkname*. The first one indicating God's creation of Adam in the form of the Most Merciful (*khalaqa Allahu Ādama fī sūrat al-Raḥmān*) was a long favorite of Sufis, interpreted in various ways in order to point out to the distinct position of the human being. The other one, also used by Sufis at times,

¹⁰⁰This idea could easily be designated as one of the most repeated imagery of 'Ishknāme. For instance: "The form (*sūrat*) of Adam is the form of God and it is the form of the Most Merciful. Therefore the face of Adam is the real *qibla* and it is the *qibla* for the angels." (Arıkoğlu, 187). From Nesîmi : "*Hakk'ı gor Ademde, Hakk'a sajid ol/ See the Truth in Adam! Of the Truth a worshiper be!*", "*Vechine cumle melâyik ins u cin/ Secde kildi gayr şeytan ar-rajīm; To thy visage all angels, men and genii/ Other than Satan the accursed, bowed down.*" (Burrill, 39-40.) There is also referral to the hadith which indicates the head and face of Adam was created from the soil of Ka'ba in order to make a case for Adam being the real Ka'ba (see Arıkoğlu, 165). The radical aspect of this idea seems to be the corporeal aspect of it; that the body of the human being or a part of it is considered to be taken as worthy of worship. Otherwise, symbolical takes on *qibla* existed in a long tradition of Sufi interpretation. "Let it be known that the real *qibla* is the heart of the believer. Let you direct yourself towards the real *qibla*." (Seyyid Mustafa Rasim Efendi, *Tasavvuf Sözlüğü*, 880). Early examples of Adam's visage being the *qibla*, however, are not lacking: "The vision of the cosmos is the *qibla* of ascetics/ The vision of Adam is the *qibla* of the lovers." (Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 299, from Ruzbihān Baqlī's *Abhār al-Āshiqān*) Also relevant to the discussion is Rumi's prescription to his son to perform "the prostration of true lovers" (*sajda-yi ashiqān*) at Shams' feet when the latter found him in Syria (N. Pourjavady, "Playing Witness in Tabriz," 214). Also see Michael Berry, "The Allegory of Drunkenness and the Theophany of the Beloved in Sixteenth Century Illustrations of Hafiz," in *Hafiz and Religion of Love*, ed. L. Lewisohn, 223-4, for elaboration on the Beloved's face being the direction of true devotion. For a Bayrami-Malāmi expression of the need for prostrating before the human being, see Idris Mukhtafī's *ghazal*, in MM, 127. "*Iktidā eden salāti daima etmez kuūd/ Kiblesi ādemdir anin dembedem eyler sücūd.*" (The person performing the prayers, does not always sit/ His *qibla* is the human being, (before whom) he prostrates at times.) He also seems to indicate Hurūfī coloring of his faith: "*Secde eyler sūret-i Rahmāna Idris her nefes./ Kible-i tahkike erdi erisip Fazl-i Vedud.*" (Before the form of the Most Benevolent [i.e. human being], Idris prostrates in every breath/ He has found the real *qibla* thanks to the generosity of the Most Loving God [or thanks to Fazl, short for Fazlallah])

was the Prophet's indication that he saw God in the form of a young man (*ra'aytu Rabbī fī ṣūratin amradin*).¹⁰¹

It was especially the human face that was understood in particular terms. Its significance was underlined through the use of specific numbers, which conveyed the secret to the creation of the universe. According to that, the number fourteen was understood to correspond to fourteen follicular features visible in the face of the human being. Seven lines that appeared from birth (the four sets of eyelashes, two eyebrows and the hair on the head) were also important. These were called maternal lines (*khutūt ummiyya*) and were related to the seven verses of the *Fatiha*. The seven additional lines of hair that are added to the male human face during puberty (mustache on two sides of the face, hair growing out of each nostril, and the hair between the lower lip and the chin) were called paternal lines (*khutūt abiyya*) and signified the inheritance each human male inherited from Adam.¹⁰² It was this prominence of the human face, which made Zulaykha fell in love with Joseph; and before this face of Joseph, his brothers prostrated.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Arıkoğlu, 109 and others. For a substantial evaluation of this hadith in its different forms and its usage by the practioners of *shāhid-bāzi* (erotico-spiritual gazing at human body), see H. Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul*, 459-63. For my attempt to establish a connection between Ḥurūfī understanding of the human body and the practioners of *shāhid-bāzi*, see footnote 31. The hadith also appears in *Sohbetname* in several instances. In one instance Ibrahim Efendi indicates that Muhammad is superior to other prophets because God manifested himself to him in the manner of a young beardless man (*amrad shābb-i qatat*) while to other prophets, he manifested himself in the form of animals and plants. (*Sohbetname*, 17b). Among qalandars, the human face was thought to be reflecting the divine beauty, thus they performed the fourfold shave to bring out this beauty. (Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 22.)

¹⁰² "Horufism" *Elr*.

¹⁰³ Arıkoğlu, 74-6. Feristeoglu begins 'Ishknāme by expounding on the concept of love (*bab al-awwal fi l-'ishq wa l-mahabbat*) in the context of the Chapter of Yusuf from the Qur'an. Verses 1-3, with their evocations of the mysterious letters *alif*, *lām*, *rā*, introduce the crucial topic of signs. (Q 12:1-6: "*Alif Lām Rā*: These are the signs (or verses) of the book that makes clear. We sent down an Arabic Qur'an, that you might perhaps be heedful. We recounted to you the best of stories, in our inspiring in you the Qur'an, even if before that you were heedless. When Joseph said to his father: O Father, I saw eleven stars and sun and moon, I saw them bowing to me in prayer! He said: Do not tell your vision to your brothers or they will contrive a plot against you; Satan to humankind is an enemy most clear." Translated by Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 43.) Expounding on love based on the story of Yusuf was quite common in Sufi literature, although Fazlallah's take on it beats the common interpretations of the time. It is quite likely that Fazlallah

Hurufīs seem to have freely declared such unconventional beliefs because they believed the time had come for such revelation. This psychology is clearly described by the Hurufī poet Nesimi who begins his Turkish *dīwān* with these lines: “The encircling ocean is in ferment / Being and space are in uproar / The eternal mystery has become manifest / Why would the gnostic (‘*ārīf*) still conceal?”¹⁰⁴ In another quatrain, Nesimi proclaims the coming of the Messiah and points to the symbolical occurrence of the apocalypse, causing the need for circumspection to be uplifted: “The sun rose from the west, the Messiah descended / See the Messiah! Or art thou evil? / Renounce (talking in) allusions, for the enigma became clear. / The trumpet sounded and the Resurrection became true.”¹⁰⁵

The Hurufis exerted significant influence in Anatolia. Some of their teachings were woven within the context of the Bektashiyya, the syncretic order of dervishes associated with the Ottoman janissaries.¹⁰⁶ One of the most important disciples of Fazlallah, Ali al-Ala (d. 1419),¹⁰⁷ is believed to have travelled to Anatolia and reside in a Bektashi convent for some time. Bektashis made use of Hurufi writings, and were the

associated himself with the prophet Joseph closely. In the Qur’an, the latter is designated as the *ṣahib-i ta’wīl* (for his ability of interpreting the dreams), which was also a title of Fazlallah. The recurrence of the theme of bowing down before the human being should also be noted.

¹⁰⁴ Burrill, 26. According to the tradition, Nesimī was admonished by another dervish to be more careful not to reveal the hidden secrets: “Come do not divulge this secret to the world in large, / Do not feed the common herd with the repast of the chosen few.” It is believed that Nesimī was responding to these lines.

¹⁰⁵ Burrill, *The Quatrains of Nesimī*, 101. Some Hurufīs indicated that having the right knowledge, they were already in heaven and absolved of the responsibilities of the *sharī’a*. (see Browne, “Some Notes,” 72-4.)

¹⁰⁶ See Browne, “Further Notes,” 534-81; Hamid Algar, “The Hurufī Influence on Bektashism,” 39-54; Bashir, *Hurufis*, 115-22; Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London: Luzac&Co. 1937), 58-62, 148-61; A. Gölpınarlı, “Bektasilik-Hurufilik ve Faḍl Allah’ın öldürülmesine düşülen üç tarih,” 15-22. The extent of Hurufī influence in Anatolia can also be traced through their persecutions in the Ottoman lands following their attempt to convert Mehmed II. There was also a Hurufī uprising in Edirne in 848/ 1444. During the sixteenth century, there were many prosecutions especially in the Balkans; see ZM, 133. For the Hurufī influence on Mevlevi order, see Gölpınarlı, *Mevlana’dan Sonra Mevlevilik* (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 2006), 285-91.

¹⁰⁷ For more information, see “Alī al-A‘lā” *Elr* (H. Algar).

principal agents in maintaining the production of copies of Fazlallah's works. The influence was also featured in Bektashi iconography that expressed the Hurufi belief of the complete manifestation of the divine essence in the physical form of a man. Thus they put forth calligraphic inscriptions which featured the names of 'Ali and Fazlallah, both representing the divine, on the human face.¹⁰⁸

The poet Nesimi¹⁰⁹ was deeply influential in Anatolia as well. He is reported to have traveled to Anatolia in the aftermath of his master's execution. He was not received well and had to leave for Aleppo where he was executed by the Mamluk authorities around the year 807/1404.¹¹⁰ His personal connections in Anatolia are vague, unlike his clear poetical influence. Many Ottoman admirers of the poet, however, remember him as a master of mystical love, mostly eradicating his Hurufi background.¹¹¹

Several scholars, on the other hand, have noted possible Hurufi influence on the Bayrami-Malāmis. Colin Imber finds clear Hurufi resonances in the poetry of various Bayrami-Malāmi pirs during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and concludes that possibly the earliest Bayrami-Malāmi representative Emir Dede (d. 1475) might have been influenced by the Hurufi missionaries who were very active in Anatolia at the time.

112

¹⁰⁸ Algar, "The Hurūfī Influence" 41- 42, 50.

¹⁰⁹ Burrill's study, *The Quatrains of Nesimî*, has already been mentioned. Other sources on Nesimî include: "Nesimî, Seyyid 'Imād al-Dīn, known as Nesimî." *EF*² (F. Babinger); "Nesimî," *TDVİA* (Azmi Bilgin); Kemāl Edib Kürkcüoğlu, *Seyyid Nesimî Dīvānı'ndan Seçmeler* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1991).

¹¹⁰ Reportedly Nesimî travelled from Azerbaijan to Bursa during the time of Murad I (r. 761-91/1359-89). For the discussion regarding his year of death, see Burrill, 28-9.

¹¹¹ See Browne, "Some Notes on the Literature and Doctrine of the Hurūfī Sect," 5. He indicates that Latīfī in his *Tezkire*, consecrates Nesimî as a martyr of love. Browne doubts if he would present him in the same light, if he knew the details of his doctrine. On a different note, Nesimî seems to have been well known among the qalandars in Anatolia, specifically Hayderis wandered around reciting his poetry. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 68.

¹¹² "Malāmātiyya, 3. In Ottoman Turkey" *EF*² (Colin Imber).

Abdulgazi G lpınarlı, on the other hand, admits that Melami writings exhibit admiration for the Hurufi founder and the martyrs. He also states that Bayrami-Mal mis regarded Fazlallah Hurufi as one of the saints of unity (*tawh d*), remembered him with respect, and read his works. Some Bayrami-Mal mis, he admits, show more Hurufi inclinations than others, but Hurufism should not be taken as one of the primary building blocks of the Bayrami-Mal miyya as in the case of the Bektashiyya.¹¹³ G lpınarlı supports this view by adding that Bayrami-Mal mis do not make much reference to the letters and numbers in the same manner with the Hurufis.

It is questionable whether the want of references to the letters and numbers necessarily indicate lack of Hurufi influence on the Bayrami-Mal miyya. The principle Hurufi teaching regarding the engraving of divinity within the human body appears quite frequently in the Bayrami-Mal mi writings. The Hurufi poet, Nesimi, does not refer to the letters and numbers in his poetry as well; the main idea is pursued through the language of *‘ishq* and ecstatic psychology of the enraptured lover. Such seems to have been the way for Bayrami-Mal mis to express themselves.

Bayrami-Mal mis, on the other hand, never understood themselves as Hurufis, although they recognized affinities within the teachings. This is evidenced in the *Sohbetname* where Ibrahim Efendi narrates an interesting episode of interaction between Nesimi and Haji Bayram. The episode itself is very unlikely to have taken place, but rather seems to have been a way of countering accusations of the Order’s association with the Hurufiyya.

Nesimi came from Aleppo and stopped by Haji Bayram Wali in Ankara. One of the dervishes informed the latter of his arrival: “*Sultanim*, someone called Nesimi

¹¹³ *MM*, 103.

came.” The dervish also described Nesimi’s perfections, and mentioned his utterance of “*Ana al-Haqq*.” Haji Bayram responded: “(if he is at the level of ‘*ana al-Haqq*’), then what am I? Sitting here, am I, the head of a donkey?”¹¹⁴

Through this anecdote, Ibrahim Efendi clearly exhibits how he sees Nesimi as inferior to Haji Bayram Wali. He seems to be trying to say that Nesimi’s statements were not in disagreement with Haji Bayram’s belief system, and that the latter, in fact, represented these teachings better. It was also a way of disassociating himself from the Hurufîyya and recapping his dedication to Haji Bayram.

Conclusion

Activities of Anatolian Sufis took shape in connection with the overall developments in the Turko-Iranian world. In this sense, Sufi orders of the late medieval Islamic world exhibit similar motifs throughout a vast geography, finding interesting resonations in Anatolia, an area that acted as the destination point for various sorts of Sufis thanks to the political imbalances in the Islamic East.

In this chapter, Sufi activities of the fifteenth century have been discussed in relation to the religious and political dynamics of the time. It has been indicated that due to the tumultuous political scene, the social prominence of the saint had increased immensely, and his spiritual, religious, and political influence had expanded significantly. Thus it was a time when various savior figures were able to emerge within the Sufi milieu making messianic claims, and declaring themselves to be rivals of the local leaders.

¹¹⁴ *Sohbetname*, 18a.

As examples, two movements that emerged around the same time with the Bayramiyya and received inspiration from similar sources were discussed. Both of these movements (that of Shaykh Bedreddin and Fazlallah Hurufi) emerged within the Sufi milieu, and yet, held distinct views regarding the end of the days, appearance of the Mahdi, and the apocalypse. These concepts were interpreted metaphorically, and the new age was understood to be a time when the monistic reality of God would be more accessible to the people in general.

Adherents of these movements had the potential to become militarily active, while mostly they expressed heavy criticism regarding the way in which they were governed through their prose, poetry, missionizing, and ushering in the age of the apocalypse. These movements expressed their political activism in a language that yearned for a change in the ways people understood and experienced the divine. Thus it was a time when such expectations were part of the religious culture of the Turko-Iranian world.

Chapter 2. Historiography of the Beginnings: The Shaykh and the Community

Mapping the *Silsila*: The Safavids and the Ottomans

Turkish Melamis ascribe the beginnings of their way to the transmission of specific teachings from the East (Persia) to Rum (Anatolia) by Hamideddin Aksarayi (d. 815/1412).¹¹⁵ He is reported to have received these teachings from Alaeddin Ardabili (henceforward, Haje Ali, d. 832/1429), grandson of Safieddin Ardabili (d. 735/1334)¹¹⁶ who was the founder of the Safavid branch of the Khalwatiyya. The Safavid branch was based in Ardabil in the northeastern Azerbaijan. Hamideddin, however, is reported to have met the shaykh in the northeastern city of Khoy, which was significant for its location on the Silk Road and closeness to the Turkish border.¹¹⁷ Khoy was also closely associated with some of the itinerant dervishes of the past century in Anatolia.¹¹⁸

The Safavid order emerged under the auspices of Shaykh Safieddin who was from Ardabil. He received spiritual guidance from Zahid Gilani (d. 690/1291),¹¹⁹ and strengthened temporal ties with the latter by marrying his daughter. After obtaining authorization from Zahid Gilani, Safieddin returned to his hometown and was able to garner quite many disciples from Iran, Anatolia and Syria. After he died, his son Sadreddin (d. 794/1391) became his successor, and then the latter's son, Alaeddin, became the shaykh of the convent in Ardabil. During the process, the convent turned into a powerhouse, by owning large areas of *waqf*-land and claiming allegiance from the local

¹¹⁵He is remembered as "Abu Hamid" in *Semerat*, "Mevlana Shaykh Hamid b. Masa al-Kaysari" in Mecdi, "Sultan Shaykh Hamid" in *MI*. He is also known by the epithet "*Somuncu Bābā*" among the Turkish people. I refer to him as "Shaykh Hamid" or "Hamideddin Aksarayi" throughout the dissertation. For further information on him, see "Somuncu Baba" *TDVIA* (Hasim Sahin); Mecdi, 74-5; *Semerat*, 227-33; *MM*, 33-4; Lāmi'i, 683-4; Ismail Erünsal, "Yeni Bir Kaynağın Işığında Somuncu Baba" in *Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi Hatıra Kitabı* (Istanbul: Istanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1995), 298-314.

¹¹⁶ On Safieddin, see "Şafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, Shaykh Abu'l-Faḥ İshāk" *EF*² (Fr. Babinger).

¹¹⁷ See "Ḳhōī, Ḳhūy" *EF*² (R. M. Savory).

¹¹⁸ Several among the Abdals of Rum, dervishes who exhibited questionable behavior and yet were influential in the expansion of the Ottoman dominion during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were known to have been from Khoy. (See the information on Geyikli Bābā and Abdal Musa in A. Yasar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı: Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı yahut Anadolu'da İslam-Türk Heteroksisinin Teşekkülü* (Dergāh Yayınları: İstanbul, 2000), 207 and 209.

¹¹⁹ For more information see Jean Aubin, "Shaykh Ibrāhīm Zāhid Gilani (1218?-1301)," *Turcica* 21-3 (1991): 39-53.

community. The Ardabilis also retained influence on the local rulers who made a point of recognizing and seeking blessing from the Safavid masters.¹²⁰

Safieddin was a Sunni of the Shafi'i law school and his Sufi allegiances were impeccable. His spiritual genealogy was traced back to the prophet based on a Khalwati lineage in this order: Safieddin Ardabili (d. 735/1334), Ibrahim Zahid Gilani, Jamal ad-Din Tabrizi, Shahab ad-Din Tabrizi (d. 702/1302), Rukn ad-Din Sinjasi (d. 628/1231), Qutb ad-Din Abhari (d. 577/1181), Abu an-Najib Suhrawardi (d. 563/1168), Wajih ad-Din al-Qadi, Muhammad al-Bakri, Muhammad Dinawari (d. 370/980?), Mamshad Dinawari (d.299/912), Junayd Baghdadi (d. 297/910), Sarī Saqati (d. 253/867), Ma'ruf Karkhi (d. 200/815), Dawud Ta'i (d. 165/782), Habib 'Ajami (d. 130/748), Hasan Basri (d. 110/728), 'Ali b. Abu Talib, the Prophet Muhammad.¹²¹

As with other Sufi chains, historical beginnings of this *silsila* is almost mythological and the earliest six characters, who constitute the basis for some sort of oral secretive knowledge being passed down all the way from Prophet Muhammad to Junayd al-Baghdadi, serve to establish the legitimacy of the order. That the passing down occurs through the son-in-law of the prophet, 'Ali, indicates reliance on open and vocal *dhikr*, which is understood to be taught to 'Ali in secret.¹²²

¹²⁰Ottoman rulers were sending special gifts to the Ardabili family every year. These were known as "*çerağ akçesi*," traditionally paid to the Sufi compounds by the followers. Timur is also reported to have been respectful to the shaykh. After his return from the war of Ankara in 1402, Timur visited the shaykh and granted him the lands around Ardabil as *waqf*. There is also a report that Timur emancipated captured Turkomans from the war in Ankara upon Haje Ali's wishes and these freed men became disciples of the latter. "Erdebil, Alāeddin" *TDVİA* (Nihat Azamat); Michel Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Şafawids: Şi'ism, Sūfism and the Ġulāt* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1972), 54.

¹²¹*Semerat*, 226; for a more detailed evaluation of the Khalwati *silsila* see John J. Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350-1750* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 21-44; J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 74.

¹²² See the full story in Curry, 33.

The 'Alid coloring in the Safavid order became stronger, however, as the order evolved into a dynasty with strong connections into the Turkish realms.¹²³ Although it is still a mystery how this Sunni Sufi family turned into a power-seeking Shi'i dynasty in a few decades, Ottoman scholars commonly note that the extremist tendencies which carried Shaykh Ismail (r. 1501-1524) to the throne did not appear until the time of Alaeddin's grandson Junayd (d. 864/1460),¹²⁴ who fell out with his uncle after his father's death and came to Anatolia seeking land from the Ottomans. He was kindly granted some money, but his wish for residency was denied. So, he traveled in Anatolia and met with some influential Sufi shaykhs, some of whom noticed Junayd's political ambitions as well as religious extremities, and warned Ottomans of his convictions (ca. 1448).¹²⁵

Once the Safavid family started to claim military allegiance in addition to spiritual dedication from their Turkish disciples in Anatolia at the time of Junayd, the relationship with the Ottoman state became strained. The strife increased during the second half of the fifteenth century and culminated in the war of Çaldıran in 1514 after Shah Isma'il's ascension to the Safavid throne. Although the Safavids were defeated, their hold over various Turkish tribes continued and the sixteenth century witnessed military appraisals in the name of Shah Isma'il in Anatolia. The Ottomans struggled with the Safavids through military expeditions as well as religious agents who gave support by declaring

¹²³ On the emergence of the Safavid Empire, see "Safawids" *EF*² (R. M. Savory); Mazzaoui, *Origins of the Safawids*; idem, "The Safavid Phenomenon: An Introductory Essay," in *Safavid Iran and Her Neighbors*, ed. M Mazzaoui (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2003), 1-6; Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Kizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism," *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994): 135-161.

¹²⁴ On Junayd see: "Djunayd, shaykh" *EF*² (R. M. Savory); "Jonayd" *EIr* (K. Babayan).

¹²⁵ "Cüneyd-i Safevi" *TDVIA* (Tahsin Yazıcı).

the infidelity of those following Shah Isma‘il.¹²⁶ The military and religious conflict dominated the Ottoman political scene during the time of Selim I (r.1512-20) with repercussions through the time of Suleyman I (1520-66). The resonances continued until modern times thanks to the establishment of communities in rural Anatolia known as *Alevis*.¹²⁷

The impact of this struggle was quite fresh during the time Ottoman biographers were putting together their narratives regarding Shaykh Hamideddin and his disciple Haji Bayram Wali, both of whom were highly revered among Anatolian people. Thus it is expected that the Bayrami interaction with the Safavids was diminished as much as possible in these sources. It is impossible to know, therefore, for how long the interaction between Bayramis and Safavids continued, or whether there was any support for the political cause of the Safavids in the Bayrami milieu.

Activities of Shaykh Hamid

Sari Abdullah, in his *Semerat*, seems to have made use of the biographical dictionaries as well as the Bayrami-Malāmi oral tradition in providing this preliminary information regarding Hamideddin Aksarayi:

¹²⁶ Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Kemāl Pashazāde (d. 940/1534) played a significant role in the Ottoman struggle against the Safavid religious propaganda. He wrote a treatise, *Fī Takfīr al-Rawāfīd*, demonstrating the war against Shah ‘Ismā‘il to be a religious duty incumbent upon each Muslim (*fard ‘ayn*). See “Kemāl Pashazāde or Ibn (-i) Kemal” *EF*² (V. L. Ménage).

¹²⁷ Various studies exist on Alevis. Those with an overview of its history and doctrines include: “Kizilbash” *EF*² (R.M. Savory); Irene Melikoff, *Uyur Idik Uyardılar: Alevilik Bektaşilik Araştırmaları* (Istanbul: Cem Yayinlari, 1994); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, “Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Kizilbash/Alevi Communities in Ottoman Anatolia” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2008); Kathryn Babayan, “The Waning of the Qizilbash: The Temporal and The Spiritual in Seventeenth Century Iran” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1993).

Shaykh Abu Hamid Aksarayi was born in Kayseri¹²⁸ and his blessed tomb is in Aksaray. He was able to bring together the inward and the outward knowledge and there was no end to his miracles... Initially, the divine secret (*sirr-i ilāhī*) and the divine rapture (*jazba-i rahmānī*) spread to Rum through him, leaving its inhabitants overwhelmed with the light of guidance. It has been related that in the past Anatolian students who were inclined to the outward or the inward knowledge would travel to the Arab or Iranian lands in order to associate with the masters (*arbāb*) and receive proper training. In the same manner, Abu Hamid also traveled and completed his study of the outward knowledge. Afterwards, he worked in the service of a shaykh at the lodge of Bayazid in Damascus for quite some time.¹²⁹ However, due to his latent capacity (*isti'dād-i 'aslī*), he could not find consolation from anybody. Later he heard that Haje 'Ala'eddin, who lived in the village of Khoy close to Tabriz, was the lampion (*mishkāt*) of the Muhammadan light. Upon deciding to travel towards his direction, Abu Hamid felt a complete cleansing in his heart.¹³⁰ As he proceeded on his journey, his burning increased more and more. In the end, he arrived at the town of Khoy and became included in the *pīr*'s companionship (*ṣuḥbat*).¹³¹

Here Sarı Abdullah describes how Hamideddin felt complete satisfaction in his heart upon coming face to face with the *pīr*. He also carefully notes that the feeling was mutual as Haje Ali was close to death at this point and was expecting to meet Hamideddin in order to transmit the entrustment (*amānat*).¹³² After meeting with him,

¹²⁸ He is noted to have been born in Kayseri by most sources including Lāmi'i and Mecdi. Askeri, however, puts his birth in Aksaray (*MI*, 204).

¹²⁹ It is not possible to confirm that a convent by the name *Khanqāh-i Bayāzidiyya* existed in Damascus at the time (see Yurd, 182). This whole incident might have been introduced to the story to proclaim a different allegiance for Hamideddin (other than his involvement with the Safavids). Mecdi and Enīsi put emphasis on Aksarayi's stay in Bayazid Bistami's lodge before he met 'Alā'eddīn Ardabili. They describe him to be an *uwaysī*, instructed by Bistami through dreams. Enīsi mentions that Hāmededdīn was instructed by a shaykh named Shādi-i Rūmī during his stay in the lodge and that the latter was attached to Naqshbandi *silsila*. [*Menakib-i Akṣemseddin* in Ali İhsan Yurd and Mustafa Kaçalin, *Akṣemseddin (1390-1459): Hayatı ve Eserleri* (Istanbul: İFAV, 1994), 140] These indications regarding his Naqshbandi affiliation are mostly favored in the Shamsiyya branch of the Bayramiyya. Lalizade also refers to the alternative Naqshbandi chain during a time when close ties were built between Bayrami-Malāmiyya and Naqshbandiyya (Lalizade, 15). Askeri makes no mention of this stay in Damascus.

¹³⁰ The original wording (*jilā' wa istijlā'*) is most probably taken from the context of Ibn 'Arabi's (d. 1245) writings and indicates God's manifestation in the perfect man. See M. Rasim, *Tasavvuf Sözlüğü: İstilahāt-i İnsan-i Kāmil*, ed. İhsan Kara (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2008), 370-1.

¹³¹ *Semerat*, 227.

¹³² Taken from the verse 33:72 (We offered the *Trust* to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it, but man carried it.). Notion of *amānat* appears frequently in Bayrami-Malāmi writings, mostly in the context of sainthood (*walāyat*).

Haje Ali was convinced that he could securely pass the light of love (*nūr-u muhabbat*) unto Hamideddin.¹³³

According to the same account, realizing the majesty of the moment of their coming together, the two spent some time expressing their adoration for each other. Then Hamideddin joined the *dhikr* session, which took place in Shams-i Tabrizi's tomb (*maqām*)¹³⁴ in the town. The session included dance and whirling (*raqs u dawarān*) which was so moving that it continued for three days leaving all disciples inebriated by the time it ended. After the session, Haje Ali found Hamideddin in a corner completely overwhelmed and cautioned him to return to his senses. As soon as this happened, Haje Ali requested that he leave for Anatolia explaining that it was destined to be the new land where the Muhammadan light would be preserved. Looking behind Abu Hamid who was already on his way towards Anatolia, Haje Ali muttered: "He took the divine secrets which were entrusted to Iranian lands and carried them to the Rum".¹³⁵

In this account of Sarı Abdullah, several points stand out that do not quite fit into the usual dynamics of master-disciple relationship. The most important one among these is the lack of a storyline where the disciple spends years with the master during which time he is thoroughly regimented and nurtured. In fact, Sarı Abdullah depicts Hamideddin and Haje Ali almost as spiritual equals who share mutual adoration for each

¹³³ Bayrami-Malāmi understanding of the *silsila* as described by Askeri indicates that the mystery of love (*sirr-i 'ishq*) was transmitted from the prophet to Ali, then to the Iranian lands, from where Hamideddin received it. One should pay attention that it is not just the teaching that is transmitted but a specific kind of light and mission. (See *MI*, 200)

¹³⁴ Shams-i Tabrizi, the enigmatic teacher and friend of Rumi. His hometown Tabriz was very close to Khoy. Some believed that after leaving Konya, Shams came to Khoy and died there. Thus In Khoy, he has a *maqām*, similar to the one in Konya. On Shams, see "Shams-i Tabrīz (ī)" *ET*² (Annemarie Schimmel).

¹³⁵ *Semerat*, 230. This account, Hamid's receipt of the degree of the sainthood and his being told to leave for Anatolia, bears strong resemblance to Haji Bektash's reception of *walāyat* from Ahmad Yasawi (d. 562/1166-7) as narrated in *Vilayetname*. A. Gölpınarlı, *Vilayetname-Name, Manakıb-ı Hünkar Hacı Bektāş-ı Velī* (Istanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1995), 16.

other. Hamideddin is there to receive a particular status (of sainthood), not to learn from the master.

There might have been two significant reasons for the manner in which the story unfolds in the *Semerat*. The first might be related to the specifics of the cult of *awliyā* that was prominent within Bayrami-Malāmi circles, which placed heavier emphasis on being divinely chosen for the status of the *awliyā* rather than achieving it through personal struggle. The second relates to the fierce contention between the Ottomans and the Safavids at the time, leading both sides to diminish any form of social, economical, or personal relationship with the other part's side of the border. This might be the reason why Sarı Abdullah pictures Hamideddin leaving Iran abruptly without any notes of further interaction between two areas. As indicated before it is quite likely that the interaction was stronger than classical sources want us to believe.¹³⁶

In a similar vein, Haji Bayram's contacts with Haje Ali's other disciples who lived in Anatolia seem to have been eliminated in biographical sources for political reasons. The relationships are likely to have continued, as evidenced in the case of Umami Kemal (d. 880/1475) who was quite possibly a disciple of Haje Ali and received great respect from Haji Bayram.¹³⁷ It is also apparent in Sarı Abdullah's indication that some of Haji Bayram's various successors, i.e. *İnce* (thin) Bedreddin, *Kızılca* (red-haired) Bedreddin, and *Uzun* (tall) Salahaddin, were in fact associates of Hamideddin and had travelled with him from Iran to Anatolia.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Kissling strongly associates the Bayramis with the Safavids in his article. See Kissling, "Zur Geschichte," 246-9.

¹³⁷ William Hickman, "Who was Umami Kemal?," *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi* 4-5 (1976-7), 57-82.

¹³⁸ *Semerat*, 144.

After leaving Khoy, Hamideddin is reported to have arrived at Bursa, possibly following the caravan road between Azerbaijan and Bursa.¹³⁹ Sarı Abdullah describes his time of residence in Bursa in these terms:

Abu Hamid arrived at Bursa during the time of Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402) and settled down there. It has been related that he had a donkey when he arrived at the city. He would carry firewood from the mountain with it, make some bread and load them up on his back... Since his breads were quite delicious, they would be quickly sold out. People of the city, however, did not know what an honorable person (*wujūd-i sharīf*) he in fact was. Since he enjoyed being concealed (*mastūr*) in this manner, he resided in Bursa for quite some time.

In the words of Askeri, Hamid Aksarayi was presenting himself as one of the *abdāl* (*budalā-şifat*) in order to keep the secret hidden;¹⁴⁰ a designation he later uses for the Bayrami-Malāmi *pīrs*, Emir Dede and Bünyamin Ayaşı.

According to Sarı Abdullah, Hamideddin's anonymous days in Bursa came to an end on the wake of the completion of the grand mosque that Bayezid I (r.1389-1402) commissioned in Bursa.¹⁴¹ The Sultan first asked Emir Sultan (d. 833/1429), a respected Sufi who was married to his daughter, to lead the first Friday prayer and deliver the sermon. Emir Sultan refused by indicating that the greatest saint of the time (*ghaws-i a'zam*) happened to be in the city and should carry out this honorable job. When asked who that was, he pointed out to Hamideddin who was consequently found and asked to deliver the sermon. When the time came and Abu Hamid ascended to the pulpit, he delivered the sermon in the most accurate form and explained the *Fatiha* in seven

¹³⁹ Regarding Bursa's position within the silk trade between Iran and Anatolia, see "Harir" *ET*² (H. Inalcik). Although not adequately researched, for a general review of Malāmi-type of Sufism in Bursa, see: Zafer Erginli, "Bursa Tasavvuf Kültüründe Horasanlı Dervişler," in *Dünden Bugüne Tasavvuf Kültürü*, ed. Ramis Dara (Bursa: Bursa Kültür Sanat ve Turizm Vakfı Yayınları, 2002), 176-94. Some sources remember the founder of the Malāmiyya branch, Emir Dede (d. 1475), having been from Bursa as well (Mecdi, 95).

¹⁴⁰ *MI*, 204.

¹⁴¹ The mosque, known as Bursa Ulu Cami, was completed in 804/1399.

different sets of meanings. The city folk were in shock that the old man they knew as the poor bread-seller possessed such detailed knowledge regarding subtleties of the Qur'an. From this point on, Hamideddin's fame grew and many started to visit him. Disturbed by this development, Hamideddin left Bursa, and embarked on a journey into Anatolia.¹⁴² Although there is some discussion with regards to what was Hamideddin's next destination, most sources indicate that he went to Aksaray where he lived for the rest of his life, died, and was buried.¹⁴³

Mir'atu' l-'ishk, however, puts these pieces of information into question by providing quite a different sequence of events. According to 'Askeri, Hamideddin seems to have left Bursa on the wake of the war in Ankara in 1402. In this war, the Timurids harshly defeated the Ottomans and sacked the city of Bursa consequently. Thus possibly escaping from this destruction, Hamideddin seems to have arrived in Adana where an adherent sheltered him for a while.¹⁴⁴

The Makings of Charisma: Who was Haji Bayram Wali?

The difference in 'Askeri's reports also relate to the circumstances of Haji Bayram's (d. 833/ca.1429)¹⁴⁵ life and his meeting with Hamideddin. Traditionally,

¹⁴² *Semerat*, 233.

¹⁴³ *Semerat*, 233; Mecdi, 74; Lami'i, 683. Aksaray was an important center-Anatolian city bordered with Konya and Ankara on the northern and western sides respectively.

¹⁴⁴ The text is very specific about the area: "the village was in the vicinity of Adana, on the mountainous side of the castle of Sis which looks over the Ceyhun River." The description clearly points out to the ancient city of Sis which is known as Kozan in modern Turkey. Mamluks most probably ruled the area at the time since it is considered to be the land of Arabs (*diyār-i Arab*) in the text (*MI*, 202).

¹⁴⁵ Regarding Haji Bayram see "Hadjdī Bayrām-i Walī" *EF*² (Menage V. L.); "Hacı Bayrām-ı Velī" *TDVİA* (Nihat Azamat); *MM*, 33-9; Taşköprülüzade, 55-6; Lami'i, 684-5; *Semerat*, 234-40; Lalizade, 14-8; Mustakimzade, 1a-10b; Vassaf II, 251-3. Studies on Bayramiyya include: "Bayramiyye" *MEBİA* (A. Gölpınarlı); "Bayramiyye" *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi* (Ekrem Işın); "Bayramiyye" *TDVİA* (Fuat Bayramoğlu and Nihat Azamat); "Bayrāmīyya" *EF*² (G. L. Lewis); H. J. Kissling, "Zur Geschichte des Derwischen

classical sources depict Haji Bayram Wali as a former madrasa teacher who became dissatisfied with the outward form of religion and started seeking *bāṭinī* (inward) teachings from Hamideddin Aksarayi. The information Lami'i provides regarding Haji Bayram, for instance, indicates that he was born in a small village (Solfasol) close to Ankara.¹⁴⁶ He worked as an instructor in the madrasa for quite some time before becoming attracted to the teachings of Shaykh Hamid. After completing his spiritual training, Haji Bayram became an influential shaykh himself. Many, comments Lami'i, have reached the peak of sainthood (*walāyat*) thanks to him.

Mecdi repeats the same information regarding his place of birth and his previous status as a madrasa teacher, but expands the narrative a little bit by asserting that Haji Bayram taught at Kara Madrasa founded by Melike Khatun in Ankara.¹⁴⁷ He also relates from “trustworthy people” of the Bayramiyya that Shaykh Hamid dispatched one of his friends (Shaykh Şücaeddin Karamani)¹⁴⁸ to go to Ankara, find the madrasa instructor by the name Haji Bayram and invite him to Kayseri. Upon receiving this invitation, Haji Bayram traveled to Kayseri and came together with Shaykh Hamid. The latter, in a miraculous act, showed him current situations of those who are dead from the ranks of ‘ulama’ as well as people of the inward (*ahl al-bāṭin*). Seeing the people of the inward in a happier state, Haji Bayram desired to become one of them and resigned from his post at the madrasa. Mecdi Efendi also comments that the Bayramiyya is a strong

Ordens der Bajramijje,” in *Südost Forschungen* 15 (1956): 237-69; Fuat Bayramoğlu, *Hacı Bayram Veli: Yaşamı, Soyu, Vakfı*, v.1-2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983).

¹⁴⁶ Lami'i, 684.

¹⁴⁷ Mecdi, 77.

¹⁴⁸ On Şüca'eddin Karamāni see Mecdi, 94-5. He is quite likely identical with the *qalandari* shaykh Shakyh Shuca. Also see “Şücaüddin Veli” TDVIA (Haşim Şahin).

straightforward path, adherents of which will not venture through the valley of perversion (*dalālat*) and will surely arrive at the station of divine guidance (*hidāyat*).

As indicated before Askeri's portrayal of Haji Bayram, however, diverges from these accounts considerably. Accordingly Haji Bayram's real name was Nu'man and he was a former *kapıcıbaşı*¹⁴⁹ who lost his job when Ottoman army was defeated in the war of Ankara in 1402.¹⁵⁰ Released from the routed army, Nu'man decided to search for Shaykh Hamid for whom he apparently had some kind of allegiance. Receiving the information that the latter was sheltered by an adherent in a village in the mountainous area of Adana, Nu'man dressed himself as a merchant (*bazirgān*) and along with some of his friends and servants headed towards Adana to find Shaykh Hamid.

According to Askeri, he found Shaykh Hamid in Adana living in modest conditions with his friend, Nebi Sufi. When they came together, Nu'man expressed his wish to be in the service of the shaykh. The latter, however, refused him saying "you will not fit into the living conditions here" and suggested that Nu'man should go back having received his blessing (*himmet*). When Nu'man insisted on staying, however, Shaykh Hamid reconsidered the situation. Indicating the impossibility of providing for the entourage Nu'man brought with him under current political conditions, he asked Nu'man to go back to Adana, pay farewells to those accompanying him; then, dress himself as a dervish and come back to the village. When Nu'man acted according to the wishes of Shaykh Hamid and returned to the village, Shaykh Hamid found it appropriate to change

¹⁴⁹ *Kapıcıbaşı* was the head of gate-keepers in the palace. It was a military job that could lead to a public office. See "*Kapıcıbaşı*" *OTDTS*, II, 167-9.

¹⁵⁰ *MI*, 202.

his name. He gave Nu‘man the name Bayram¹⁵¹ as in a couple of days it would be the time of the religious festival.

In the *Mir‘at*, statements regarding Haji Bayram’s being a former madrasa teacher are also addressed. Pir Ali’s perspective on the issue is reported in this vein:

In one of the gatherings (after Pir Ali told the above-given story of Haji Bayram), someone asked: “Today his descendants do not say things like that. They say Haji Bayram was an instructor (*mudarris*), he came from the madrasa and then became a dervish.” Pir Ali responded: “What they say is also true. He is the instructor of the school of love (*işk medresesinin muderrisidir*). He is the cornerstone of the classroom of ‘*alamnāh min ladunna*.’¹⁵² That is how our elders taught this humble servant.”¹⁵³

Clearly Pir Ali saw Haji Bayram’s affiliation with the madrasa only as metaphorical. The text indicates that it was his descendants who claimed Haji Bayram’s affiliation with the madrasa. These descendants were inheritors of the convent in Ankara and continued to be granted endowments throughout the Ottoman rule.¹⁵⁴ Seemingly, the madrasa where Haji Bayram supposedly taught, Kara Madrasa founded by Melike

¹⁵¹ A Turkish word used for Islamic festivals (The occasion was ‘*id al-adha*). The text implies “Haji Bayram” title was given because it was the time of the festival of pilgrimage in Mecca.

¹⁵² Referring to Q 18:65. “We have given (them) knowledge from Our own presence”.

¹⁵³ *MI*, 203.

¹⁵⁴ This *waqf* land in Ankara continued to belong to the descendants of Haji Bayram Wali for centuries until the abolition of *awqāf* in 1928. Fuat Bayramoglu who belonged to this family published a very good study of the *waqf* together with many original documents from the late Ottoman centuries: *Haci Bayram-i Veli: Yasami, Soyu, Vakfı*, I-II, (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 1983). This study, however, does not consider how this *waqf* was made use of by the Ottomans. It is possible that it served as a place of rehabilitation for the Ottoman dominion over the unruly dervishes. A process similar to the Ottoman policy with regard to Bektashis—maintaining communication with the order’s main *zāwiya*, while ignoring other free-wheeling dervishes—might have taken place concerning Bayramiyya as well. See S. Faroghi, “Bektāshis: Report on Current Research” in *Bektāchiyya*, 18-9. “From the 16th cent onward, the Bektashi order consisted of two branches. One was associated with the presumed descendants of Haji Bektash who controlled the order’s main *zāwiya* and the other consisted of unmarried *bābās* who claimed institution by the order’s “second founder” Balım Sultan. The Ottoman administration concerned itself almost exclusively with the shaykhs of the *zawiyas* and all but completely ignored the unmarried *bābās*.” Also see Watenpaugh’s brilliant article exploring the facets and dynamics of a similar transformation in the case of Shaykh Abu Bakr ibn al-Wafa’ (1503-83) in Aleppo. He explains in detail how *waqfs* were employed by the Ottoman hegemony “to discipline and absorb antinomian groups into the normative structures of the society.” Watenpaugh also explores the fluctuation of the saint’s and brotherhood’s image after such integration takes place. (Watenpaugh, “Deviant Dervishes,” 537 and others.)

Khatun, was included in the endowment that Haji Bayram's descendants received.¹⁵⁵

Therefore there is a chance that Haji Bayram's instruction in the madrasa was construed at some point to prove the legitimacy of the endowment.

The storyline that depicts the former madrasa student or the teacher turning into a Sufi disciple is a very common theme in Sufi literature of the time. While some of these narratives are certainly true and indicative of the attraction Sufi movements had at the time, others, it seems, should be taken with a grain of salt.¹⁵⁶ In the case of Haji Bayram, the report regarding his being a former *mudarris* seems quite doubtful in the light of Pir Ali's detailed account. Moreover Haji Bayram's literary output¹⁵⁷ as well as his practices as a communal-life leader¹⁵⁸ does not lead us to picture Haji Bayram as a person with madrasa background. He certainly did not try to bring his practices into harmony with the shari'a in scholastic terms. It was rather his disciple Akşemseddin who tried to defend the practices of Haji Bayram's disciples in accordance with the authoritative Islamic texts. His allegiance to Haji Bayram, however, had occurred after a period of doubt due to the latter's questionable practices as will be discussed in the next section.

¹⁵⁵ Omer Lutfi Barkan, "Kolonizator Turk Dervisleri," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942): 318-9. According to Nihat Azamat, there is no confirmation that there was a Kara Madrasa at the time in Ankara as described by Mecdi. (Azamat, "Haci Bayram Veli" *TDVIA*.)

¹⁵⁶ See Ocak's evaluation regarding a similar process taking place with regard to Shaykh Edebali, the supposed spiritual adviser of Osman, the founder of the Ottomans. (Ocak, *Babai Isyani*, 174.) Ocak sees Taşköprülüzâde responsible for providing misconstrued images for the leading spiritual men. A similar process, might have taken place regarding Haji Bayram's mentor Hamideddin as well.

¹⁵⁷ There are pieces of poetry ascribed to Haji Bayram, they are written in simple but yet beautiful Turkish. The most famous piece can be found in the opening pages of Cemal Kafadar's *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*: "My Lord has created a city / In between two worlds. / One sees the Beloved if one looks / At the edge of the city. / I came upon that city / And saw it being built. / I too was built with it / Amidst stone and earth." (Several commentaries were written on this poem throughout the Ottoman times. The "city" is used as a metaphor for the human being and the "Beloved" indicates God.)

¹⁵⁸ For more detail on the communal life in Haji Bayram's *tekke* see William Hickman, "Who was Ummei Kemal?" 72.

Askeri also provides information regarding the time Haji Bayram spent with Shaykh Hamideddin. He indicates that they traveled towards Syria after a short while, and then, not losing much time there they were on their way to Hijaz.¹⁵⁹ Presumably after performing pilgrimage there, they returned to Sis in Adana, and then moved to Aksaray where Shaykh Hamid lived until his death. Shaykh Hamid granted authorization (*ijāza*) to Haji Bayram after a year in Aksaray and sent him to Ankara.

At the time, Ankara was governed by a local city government of *akhīs* who held the power in the aftermath of defeat in Ankara in 1402 until its annexation to the Ottomans by Murad II in 1416.¹⁶⁰ There, Haji Bayram and his dervishes settled down in the ruins of the Temple of Augustus¹⁶¹ where Haji Bayram Mosque stands today next to the columns of the ancient temple. The initial construction by Haji Bayram's dervishes seems to have been building small rooms that could be used for lodging and spiritual exercise. Several rooms that are beneath the mosque today are believed to have been used by dervishes to undergo *chilla*, a forty-day solitary retreat that was the primary spiritual

¹⁵⁹ The text seems to indicate that they left for Hijaz in a hurry because Timur was on his way to Syria. It reads "when Timur reached Syria, Sultan Shakyh Hamid was at the Ka'ba" and also mentions that Timur did not embark on a campaign against the holy land because he was aware that the *qutb* (Shaykh Hamid) was there. This information is problematic, since Timur did not head towards Syria after his victory against the Ottomans. Rather it was the other way around: Timur campaigned in Syria before he set out against the Ottomans. ("Timur Lang" *EF*²)

¹⁶⁰ In Ankara, which Ibn Battuta bypassed in 1333, leading Akhis appeared as public benefactors and builders of mosques as early as 689/1290. The regime of Akhis continued until 1361, when Murad I annexed the city. After the war of Ankara, the governance fell into the hands of the local Akhis again. Arnakis, G. G., "Futuwwa Traditions in the Ottoman Empire: Akhis, Bektashi Dervishes and Craftsmen", *JNES* 12 (1953), 235-6.

¹⁶¹ The temple dates as early as 25 BCE, and when Haji Bayram's friends arrived there they probably found no more than the walls holding the building. On this temple see, Daniel Krencker and Martin Schede, *Der Tempel in Ankara*, Berlin: Walter De Gruyter Incorporated, 1936. The book includes several pictures of the mosque of Haji Bayram as it looked in 1926. The mosque was built attached to the tomb of Haji Bayram in the following centuries.

exercise used by Khalwatis.¹⁶² Similar constructions can also be seen attached to the tomb of his mentor Hamideddin in Aksaray.

The area around the temple was used for cultivation; Haji Bayram and disciples worked on the land and survived by their own means. The practice, it seems, was required by Hamideddin who believed in surviving by his own means as evidenced by his life style in Bursa. He seems to have consigned the same principle to his disciples who were set to leave for establishing new communities. According to the *Mir'at*, this conversation occurred between the shaykh and Haji Bayram before the latter left for Ankara:

(When he was granted permission to leave for Ankara) Haji Bayram asked: "What work should I do? I do not have any skills." Sultan Hamid replied: "Grow crops." Haji Bayram asked again: "What kind of crops should I grow?" He said: "Grow wheat." Haji Bayram went to Ankara and started by planting wheat. The seeds that he used are still planted today.¹⁶³

During Haji Bayram's residence in Ankara, the rebellion of Bedreddin took place in western Anatolia around 1416. It is quite likely that Haji Bayram's circle shared common ideas with this revolution, although they do not seem to have actively participated in the military uprising. Possibly in connection with this rebellion, however, Murad II (r. 1421-1451) ordered Haji Bayram to be arrested and summoned to Edirne where the Sultan could interrogate him face to face.¹⁶⁴ According to the *Semerat*, the

¹⁶² "Hacı Bayram Veli Külliyesi" *TDVİA* (M. Baha Tanman).

¹⁶³ Erünsal, 203.

¹⁶⁴ *Semerat*, 235-6. The arrest has also been attributed to Haji Bayram's connections with the Safavid family. Azamat suggests that connections between Khoy and Ankara were strong based on the record of a merchant who travelled to Anatolia from Khoy and chose Haji Bayram Veli's lodge as his first stopping point. "Hacı Bayram Veli" *TDVİA*, based on Sherifzade Mehmed's *Menâkib-i Burhāneddin Eḡridiri*, written in 1005/1596.) In a similar context, some suggest that Bayrami dervishes used to wear the red Safavid headdress with twelve stripes in the beginning and then changed it to the white Bayrami headdress with six stripes after Haji Bayram's meeting with Murad II in order to dispel association with the Safavids. [See the discussion in "Bayramiyye" *TDVİA* (F. Bayramoglu and N. Azamat)]. Although Azamat shows Mustakim-zade's *Risala al-Tâjiyya* as the basis for this claim, as far as I could see this risala in fact provides the opposite view. "...Zahid Geylani gave his disciple Shaykh Safi ad-Din a green taj assuming he

arrest took place because some people had notified the Sultan that Haji Bayram was attracting too many followers in Ankara and was making unfounded claims. It was suggested that his teachings could lead to deviance, or that Haji Bayram might have an eye on the Sultan's throne. According to the same account, by exhibiting many miracles during this journey and putting forth compelling speeches, Haji Bayram convinced the Sultan of his innocence. The latter showed many favors to the shaykh during his stay in Edirne. When Haji Bayram returned to Ankara, the Sultan sent him a letter indicating that those who were wearing the Bayrami attire would be exempt from the governmental taxes (*'urfi*). Thanks to this good news, indicates Sarı Abdullah, many villagers became followers of Haji Bayram.¹⁶⁵

An amicable relationship seems to have been formed between Murad II and Haji Bayram Wali following this incident. Several local historians of Edirne also put Haji Bayram in Edirne around 829/1425, the objective being to join the ground breaking ceremonies of the bridge (Uzun Kopru) that was built under the auspices of Murad II.¹⁶⁶

From the general depiction of Murad II in Sufi historical literature, we deduce that he had shown sympathy towards the Sufis of ecstatic behavior. He is reported to have been benevolent towards Shaykh Şüca, who is also said to have been friendly with Haji

was from the family of the Prophet. It was about two-spans long. However, suspicious of his own belonging to the family of the prophet, Shaykh Safi wore a white *taj*... it was also about two-spans long. When Hamid al-Aksarayi (who belonged to this *silsila*) appointed Haji Bayram as a successor, he dressed the latter in the same way (with a white *taj* of two spans long)... (in the Safavid family) it was Junayd's son Haydar who changed it into the red headdress with twelve strips to distinguish his disciples from Bayramiyya." (Anetschofer (ed. and trans.) *Risāla al-Tājiyya*, 68.) Therefore it is not Mustakim-zade who ascribes Safavid headdress to Bayramis, but rather Hudāi Efendi in his *Waqiāt*. (see Gölpınarlı, "Bayramiye" MEBIA). I find this account highly doubtful since Ottoman ties with the Safavid family were on good terms during the time of Haji Bayram and the fallout did not occur until the very end of Murad II's reign, which makes it unnecessary for Haji Bayram to erase his association with the Safavid family.

¹⁶⁵ *Semerat*, 239-40.

¹⁶⁶ Bayramoglu, 25, footnote; from Ismail Hakki Balkas, *Tarihte Edirne ve Uzun Köprü* (Edirne: 1958), 28-9. Several *waqf*-convents and neighborhoods were established in Edirne in the name of Haji Bayram Wali during this time (ibid, 27, footnote.)

Bayram.¹⁶⁷ Another example of such treatment is his goodwill towards the Sufi rebel Shaykh Bedreddin's sons and grandsons.¹⁶⁸ Interestingly both Shaykh Şüca and Shaykh Bedreddin's grandson Khalil are reported to have met the Sultan Murad II and gained his approval during the latter's military expeditions. Thus they exemplify how the circle around Haji Bayram was eager to fight with Murad II in his military efforts. In this respect, we seem to have a classical example of the cooperation between the rulers and the Sufi dervishes of the early Ottoman times.

When Haji Bayram died, he was a powerful shaykh with connections and successors spread out in Anatolia. This remembrance of his funeral day by a fifteenth century Khalwati shaykh clearly demonstrates the power that Haji Bayram had over the hearts of Ankara's residents at the time.

The day that Haji Bayram Sultan went to afterlife, a farmer came to the city of Ankara to get a plowshare repaired. He saw there was no one in the shops; instead they had gone to the funeral prayer of Haji Bayram... he hung the plowshare around his waist and went to the funeral prayer also. Afterwards, the ironworkers put the plowshare into the forge, and while they worked hard, they couldn't get it hot, and they stood surprised and bewildered. They informed the chief judge and the mufti. They were also stupefied... in the end, when they informed a noble (Sufi)... who was a person having secret knowledge from the successors of Haji Bayram, he asked with the inspiration of God, "Where did you take the plowshare?"

¹⁶⁷ Shaykh Şücā' was from the circle of Shaykh Hamid and had fought with Murad II in Edirne. Reportedly he saved Sultan's life during the battle and hence Murad II built a mosque and a dervish lodge in Edirne in his name. (His epithet Şücā' (*shujjā'*) is from Arabic, meaning "the courageous") (See Mecdi, 94-5; Hickman, "Ummi Kemal," 59.) Shaykh Şücā' was a Sufi of *qalandarī* type: he exhibited deviant renunciation, did not wear proper clothing and shaved his beard, eyebrows and hair. (For more information on Shaykh Şücā' see, Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 63 and 77.) There are also reports that Haji Bayram Wali visited Shaykh Şücā' in his lodge despite the criticism of some of his disciples. ["Hacı Bayram Veli" *TDVİA* (N. Azamat); from Orhan Köprülü, "Velayetnâme-i Sultan Şücâeddin, *TM* 17 (1972): 177-84.]

¹⁶⁸ Shaykh Bedreddin's (ex. 1416) grandson Khalil wrote a *Menakibnâme* on the memory of his grandfather and on later adventures of the family after Bedreddin's execution. In this book, he explains that they (Khalil and his paternal uncles) joined the war in Kosova with Murad II after they became disciples of Akshemseddin in Göynük. Murad II showed them great reverence, made Khalil *imam* of the soldiers during the prayer, and used very kind words towards him and his uncles. Khalil also indicates that there was an ecstatic Sufi (*majzûb*) in the group, exhibiting miraculous acts. Murad II offered to give his village as *waqf* land to him but the latter refused. (Gölpınarlı, *Seyh Bedreddin ve Menakibi*, 220)

As soon as that person gave word that he was present at Haji Bayram's funeral prayer and that the plowshare was with him, that noble one among the people of states solved the problem. He explained in pure belief, saying: "It is a sign that he who prayed the funeral prayer of Haji Bayram Sultan will not burn in the fiery wood of hell, due to the sanctity of that master."¹⁶⁹

Doctrine of Oneness of Being According to the Bayramis

As a distinct feature, the Bayramiyya order showed a strong inclination toward monistic understandings of the cosmos. In the words of Lewis:

The chief doctrinal peculiarity of the Order, and another mark of its Malāmi origin, is that the devotee was introduced to the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* at the beginning of his spiritual career, and not at the end of it as in other Orders. He must first grasp that all acts are from God (*tawḥīd-i af'āl* or *fanā'i af'āl*); next, that the acts are a manifestation of the attributes, all of which are God's attributes (*tawḥīd-i* or *fanā'i ṣifāt*); finally, that the attributes are a manifestation of essence, that existence is one, and that all things are manifestations of the *a'yān-i 'ilmiyya* which exist in God's knowledge (*tawḥīd-i* or *fanā'i dhāt*).¹⁷⁰

In Haji Bayram Wali's poetry, this convoluted language (seemingly based on the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi) finds simple uncomplicated expressions in Turkish. "Whoever knows His acts / He found the Attributes / There he found the Essence / You know yourself, you know yourself."¹⁷¹

While reliance of this language of oneness upon the teachings of Ibn Arabi is apparent, such an influence seems to have been carried into the Bayrami order through various Persian works. Among these, two can be clearly identified: Fakhruddin 'Iraqi's

¹⁶⁹ Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought*, 161-2, quoting from Omer al-Fu'adi (d. 1045/1636), "Menākib-i Serīf-i Pīr-i Halvetī Hazret-i Sa'bān-i Veli ve Turbenāme," Süleymaniye Lib., Hacı Mahmud Efendi Coll., no. 4598).

¹⁷⁰ "Bayramiyya" *EF*² (G. L. Lewis); based on "Bayramiye" *MEBIA* (A. Gölpınarlı).

¹⁷¹ Gölpınarlı, *Türk Tasavvuf Şiiri Antolojisi*, 115

(d.688/1289) *Lama 'at*¹⁷² and Shabustari's *Gulshan-i Raz*.¹⁷³ The former was translated into Turkish by a disciple of Haji Bayram Wali, Ince Bedreddin,¹⁷⁴ who describes circumstances of his translation in the foreword of his work. He explains that Haji Bayram would expound on metaphors and wonders of *Lama 'at* in his speeches. Many dervishes, saddened by the fact that they did not know Arabic or Persian, pressured Bedreddin to translate the text into Turkish. Once Haji Bayram heard about the situation, he encouraged him by saying "May God give you diligence (*Gayret vere, gayret vere*)". Proving his dedication to the shaykh, Bedreddin ascribes completion of the translation to this prayer (*himmet*).¹⁷⁵

Another Persian treatise, *Gulshan-i Raz*, remained specifically important for the Bayrami order for centuries. It was first translated into Turkish in 829/1426 by Elvan Shirazi in an expanded form which contributed greatly to the development of a Sufi vocabulary in the nascent poetry of the Ottomans. Although there is a report that Elvan Shirazi was himself a Bayrami, this is difficult to be confirmed by the early sources.¹⁷⁶ His translation of *Gulshan-i raz*, however, became the basis for *Gülzar-i ma'nevi*, a work similar in content and meter, by Ibrahim Tennuri (d. 887/1482), a disciple of

¹⁷² *Lama 'at* has been translated into English: William C. Chittick and Peter Lamborn Wilson (trans.), *Divine Flashes*, New York: Paulist Press, 1982. This book is a very famous contribution to the Persian '*ishq*' literature and is also considered to be an important example of this literature getting woven with Ibn 'Arabi's teachings. 'Irāqī in his foreword to *Lama 'at* points out to Ahmad Ghazali's (d. 520/1126) *Sawanih* as the primary vein of influence for his work. For more information on *Lama 'at*'s importance for Anatolian Sufism, see "Fahreddin-i Irāki" *TDVIA*.

¹⁷³ See "Golsan-i Rāz" *Elr* (H. Algar).

¹⁷⁴ Mecdi, 94. Ince Bedreddin might have been from Azerbaijan area and fluent in both Persian and Turkish. 'Atāyī records that he came from Iran together with Shaykh Hamid and then joined Haji Bayram's circle. He also claims that Ince Bedreddin had a lot followers in Larende (today Karaman, located in the south of Konya) and Bursa, and that they performed a special *dhikr* known as *koyun zikri*, *dhikr* of the sheep ('Atāyī, 64).

¹⁷⁵ Azamat, "Hacı Bayram Veli", 446; from Ince Bedreddin, *Tercume-i Lemaat*, Bursa Eski Yazma ve Basma Eserler Ktp, Ulucami, no. 1751/1, 2a-b.

¹⁷⁶ See the discussion in "Elvan Şirāzī" *TDVIA* (Mustafa Özkan).

Akşemseddin. This work also remained quite popular within the order, both in Shamsi and Melami branches.

Askeri in his *Mir'at* quotes quite often from *Gulshan-i raz*, mainly from Elvān's Turkish translation, as well as from *Gülzar-i ma'nevi*.¹⁷⁷ Sarı Abdullah in his *Semerat* quotes from *Gulshan-i raz* and *Gülzar-i ma'nevi* quite often as well. In a similar vein, a relatively late representative of the Melami branch, 'Abdullah Bosnevi (d. 1054/1644), was interested in Elvan Shirazi's work and authored *Gülshen-i raz-i 'arifan* following its lead.

Qalandari tendencies in the early years of the Bayramiyya

Akbıyık (d. 860/1455)¹⁷⁸ is one of the enigmatic figures of Haji Bayram's circle. Various contradictory stories are told regarding him and it is hard to put together a coherent picture. According to Mecdi, he was involved in an argument with Haji Bayram as a result of which he left the convent in Ankara.¹⁷⁹ The argument was due to Akbıyık's ambition to become wealthy, to which Haji Bayram objected, seeing it incompatible with the lifestyle of a dervish. Upon Akbıyık's insistence on the permissibility of making wealth, Haji Bayram became angry and ended his spiritual connection with him. At this moment Akbıyık's Bayrami headdress miraculously fell from his head as he was about to

¹⁷⁷ Pir Ali also knew *Gülzar* well according to Askeri. He relates that once Pir Ali quoted lines from *Gülzār* and explained them in accordance with fifty-six different aspects (*MI*, 196).

¹⁷⁸ Akbıyık is an epithet meaning "white-moustached". In some sources his real name is suggested to be Ahmed Shemseddin. See "Akbıyık Sultan" *TDVİA* (H. Kamil Yılmaz).

¹⁷⁹ Mecdi, 126-7.

leave the convent. Thus, reports Mecdi, Akbıyık spent the later part of his life without wearing anything on his head and wandering around like a madman (*majnūn*). He had a son who continued the same tradition.

From the way Mecdi describes the sequence of events, we gather that the madness was attributed to him due to his appearance: he wandered around with bare head and let his hair grow long;¹⁸⁰ both of which were humiliating for a proper man of the time. There are some hints in Akbıyık's life story, however, which do not exactly match the portfolio of a madman. Mecdi, again, relates that he became quite wealthy later on. The source of his wealth is not mentioned; but other sources mention that he was entrusted some land in Bursa by Murad II in 841/1438.¹⁸¹ Upon this land, a large convent (*zāwiya*) was built by Akbıyık's family and it continued to be managed by his descendants for centuries.¹⁸² Akbıyık also seems to have been in connection with the Bayrami network for a long time, even joining the siege of Istanbul together with Akşemseddin in 1453.

Moreover, Akbıyık seems to have taken on some literary activity. Some poetry under the pseudonym of *Shams-i Khuda* (the sun of God) is attributed to him. If this attribution is true, we might be able to claim that Akbıyık's lack of Bayrami headdress was not due to an argument with Hacı Bayram, but rather was intentional and consistent with the idea of *malāmat*. In his verses, Akbıyık states: "I have been blamed due to your

¹⁸⁰ Quite possibly following his tradition, Hudai, also let his hair grow long and instructed Jalwati dervishes to do the same. See the picture in, Anetshofer, Abb. 24.

¹⁸¹ Ekrem Hakki Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimarîsinin İlk Devri*, I, 359-60. Ayverdi misinforms the reader by interpreting the Sultan in question as Murad I (1360-89). Akbıyık Sultan might have earned this land thanks to his contribution as a fighter in the *gaza*. It is quite certain that Akbıyık joined several wars, although it is impossible to know in which specific ones he was present. There some reports that Akbıyık joined the Kosova war in 1448 and his role in the conquest of Istanbul (together with Akşemseddin) is quite clear.

¹⁸² It was managed as a large farm and had workers of its own. (Barkan, 189) For more information on this *zāwiya* see Mehmed Semseddin, *Bursa Dergahlari (Yādigār-i Şemsî)* (Bursa: Uludağ Yayınları, 1997), 275-7.

love, o Friend / I am not a Sufi that I can do hypocrisy.”¹⁸³ Here Akbıyık describes himself as a follower of doctrine of *malāmat* (blame), and considers usual Sufis to be hypocrites. If not taken as pure poetical utterances, these lines indicate that *malamati* worldview, which took Sufi dress and behavior as pretentious, were quite indigenous to the beginnings of Bayramiyya.

Such a critique of Sufism was also a feature of the *qalandari*¹⁸⁴ worldview. It is quite possible that Akbıyık exhibited some *qalandari* tendencies, and that madness was attributed to him for this reason. In fact, although not mentioned in classical sources, *qalandari* coloring might have been quite prevalent in the beginnings of Bayramiyya. This is evidenced in the stories Haji Bayram’s association with Shaykh Shūca who was a significant *qalandari* shaykh with a large following. It is also significant that Mecdi reports some Bayrami disciples had the custom of wandering around in the streets of Ankara carrying drums (*tabl* and *nakkāre*), standard (*tuğ*), and flag (*‘alem*) asking money from people.¹⁸⁵ A very similar practice was carried out by qalandars who resided in convents during the winter months and led itinerant lives during the summer when they had to ask people for money.¹⁸⁶ Therefore it is quite probable that figures who were

¹⁸³ “*Melāmet olmuşum aşkınla ey dost/ Değilim Sofi ben edem riyāyı.*” Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk, *Tekke Şiiri Antolojisi* (Ankara: Edebiyat Yayınevi, 1968), 101.

¹⁸⁴ For general information on *qalandars* and their place within the larger Sufi network see, A. T. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period 1200-1550* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006); Simon Digby, “Qalandars and Related Groups.” In *Islam in Asia*, volume 1, ed. Y. Friedmann (Colorado: Magnes Press, 1984), 60-108. Regarding activities of qalandars in Anatolia during the Ottoman times see, “Kalenderiyye” *TDVİA* (Nihat Azamat); Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Marjinal Sûfilik: Kalenderiler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999); idem, “Kalenderi Dervishes and Ottoman Administration.” For interesting observations regarding a group of *qalandari*-type of dervishes in Aleppo and their transformation into settled Sufis, see Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, “Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, and the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37, no. 4 (Nov. 2005): 535-65.

¹⁸⁵ Mecdi, 240.

¹⁸⁶ Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, 73.

described to be *majdhūbs* (the divinely pulled ones)¹⁸⁷ and *majnūns* (madmen) in the circle around Haji Bayram were in fact *qalandari* dervishes.

Final words on Haji Bayram's Heritage

Sources record various other names that were associated with the circle around Haji Bayram.¹⁸⁸ Among these, Akshemseddin and Emir Dede, formed their own branches, the Shamsiyya and the Melamiyya. Another branch, the Jalwatiyya,¹⁸⁹ appeared later in Bursa and was also formed in Haji Bayram's lineage. The founder, Aziz Mahmud Hudai (1038/1628),¹⁹⁰ who exerted significant influence on the Ottoman rulers in Istanbul during the seventeenth century, was a disciple of Uftade (d. 988/1580)¹⁹¹ from Bursa. The latter, on the other hand, was a disciple of Hızır (*Khidr*) Dede (d. 918/1512) who claimed attachment to the Bayrami tradition. The manner of attachment, however, is not quite clear, and there are various scenarios linking Hızır Dede to Haji Bayram. Some sources

¹⁸⁷ This form of translation for *majdhūb* belongs to Karamustafa, see *Unruly Friends*, 17.

¹⁸⁸ Among other names recorded by Mecdi and Lāmi'i from the circle of Haji Bayram include: Kızılca Bedreddin (Bedreddin-i *Ahmar*, the red-haired Bedreddin), Baba Nahhas Ankaravi, Shaykh Muslihuddin, Shaykh Lutfullah, and Bolulu Salahaddīn. There is scarce information on these figures; a few clues we can pick up on are that some of them were artisans (*Nahhās*- the coppersmith) and that some might have fought in various wars. Mecdi elaborates on only one of them, Shaykh Lutfullāh, who was from a prominent family and lived in Balıkesir. He met Hajji Bayram when he visited Ankara and received training there. He returned to Balıkesir with authorization from Hajji Bayram and is buried there today. (Mecdi, 95-6).

¹⁸⁹ "Djilwatiyya" *EF*² (A. Gölpınarlı); "Celvetiyye" *TDVİA* (Hasan Kamil Yılmaz). Springing from the word *jalwa*- being together with the people as opposed to *khalwa* (retreat), the Jalwatiyya also displays some *malāmati* inclinations.

¹⁹⁰ "Hudā'i, Maḥmūd b Faḍl Allah b. Maḥmūd" *EF*² (I. Beldiceanu-Steinher); "Aziz Mahmud Hudā'i" *TDVİA* (Hasan Kamil Yılmaz). Significant Malāmi personae (Sarı Abdullah and Oğlanlar Şeyhi İbrahim Efendi) were sheltered and protected by Hudā'i against the political pressures.

¹⁹¹ Some of Uftade's poetry has been translated into English: Paul Ballanfat, *The Nightingale in the Garden of Love: The Poems of Uftāde*, trans. Angela Culme-Seymour (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2005).

describe a direct encounter and succession between the two,¹⁹² others link them through the latter's disciple Akbıyık,¹⁹³ or through Akşemseddin's successors in Bursa.¹⁹⁴ Most modern scholars follow the version that puts forth Akbıyık's involvement, which seems possible according to the dates.

Haji Bayram seems to have been quite successful in bringing together various types of disciples with different backgrounds and leanings. His entourage was made of dervishes of various sorts including those with *qalandari* leanings, simple farmers and artisans, as well as people of erudition and scholarship. Once this influential shaykh of impressive wit passed away, however, it seems to have become difficult for the order to hold together these various audiences. Thus different Bayrami colorings put forth their own ways of living, none of which should be considered completely out of the realm of Haji Bayram's heritage.

By forming a close relationship with Murad II and accepting endowments from him, Haji Bayram seems to have deviated from the tradition of his mentor, Hamid Aksarayı, who was careful to remain distant from the political authority. In this sense, the Bayramiyya can be understood to have rehabilitated some of the deviant urges of the *qalandari* groups as Haji Bayram Wali became a settled shaykh on the endowed land. This endeavor possibly continued with Akşemseddin who enjoyed similar favors from Murad II. The resistance of the free-wheeling dervish to the *waqf*-land, however, as a

¹⁹² In *Wāqiāt*, where Hudā'ī provides memories of his discipleship with Uftade, Hızır Dede is described to have worn the Bayrami dress (*al-kiswat*) from Haji Bayram without providing details. (Bahadıroğlu, 35; based on *Wāqiāt* I, Uskudar Hacı Selim Ağa Library, Hudāyī Collection, no. 250, 55b)

¹⁹³ Sarı Abdullah gives this version in *Semerat*, 145. Gölpinarlı reiterates it in *MM*, 39. Also see Yurd, 111. and *OTDTS* I, 274 on Akbıyık's position in the genealogy.

¹⁹⁴ This version (passing down from Haji Bayram to Akşemseddin, Hamdullah Celebi, and Hızır dede) is provided in Harırizāde Kamāl Dīn, *Tibyān wasā'il al-ḥakā'ik fī bayān salās al-tarā'ik*, Fātiḥ Lib., Ibrāhīm Efendī Collection, Nos. 430-2, i, 227b, 246a. See the discussion in Bahadıroğlu, 34-35 (believes Haji Bayram might have visited Bursa and met with Hızır Dede).

hallmark of *qalandari* and *malāmati* networks, emerged again in the figure of Emir Dede who became the head of the Melami branch as will be explored in the following sections.

A Disciple from the Madrasa: Akşemseddin

As mentioned before, the Bayramiyya was split into two branches after the death of Haji Bayram Wali. The branch headed by Akşemseddin¹⁹⁵ (d. 863/1459) was called the Shamsiyya, while the other branch founded by Emir Dede¹⁹⁶ (d. 880/1475) came to be known as the Bayrami-Malāmiyya. The most distinct feature of the latter group, whose historiography will be provided in the next two chapters, was their renunciation of the Bayrami headdress and the Sufi cloak, thus choosing to become invisible among the common masses. Although there might have been deeper roots for this choice, in classical sources it is explained in the context of a conflict between Akşemseddin and Emir Dede, two successors of Haji Bayram with quite different leanings. These two figures will be introduced below and circumstances of the conflict will be studied. Then

¹⁹⁵ Known by this title most frequently, Akşemseddin's real name was Muḥammad. He is referred as Muḥammad b. Ḥamza by his brother who translated his risala *Kitab Daf' Matāin* into Turkish. [This translation (under the title *Kāshif al-Mushkilāt*) can be found in: Ali İhsan Yurd and Mustafa Kacalin, *Akşemseddin (1390-1459): Hayatı ve Eserleri* (Istanbul: IFAV, 1994), 207-97.] For more information see "Ak Shams al-Dīn, properly Muḥammad Shams al-Milla wa'l-Dīn" *ET*² (H. J. Kissling.); "Akşemseddin" *TDVIA* (Orhan Köprülü and Mustafa Uzun); Tasköprülüzāde, 226-32.

¹⁹⁶ For general information on Emir Dede see, "Ömer Dede Sikkīnī" *TDVIA* (Haşim Şahin). Earliest sources remember him with the name "Emir"; Askeri calls him Emir Dede Sultan, and mentions he was known to be a cutler (*Bicakci*) (*MI*, 201-2); Kafavi uses the Arabic form of the same title "al-Emir al-Sikkini." The name Emir might be alluding to his being a sayyid, as it was a title used for *sāda* in Anatolia. Calling him Ömer, the Turkish form of Arabic 'Umar, starts with Taşköprülü-zade (*Şakaik*, 77), continues with Lami'i and Mecdi (Lami'i, 684; Mecdi, 95-6). I follow Askeri's designation and call him "Emir Dede" throughout the dissertation.

the discussion will move to the importance of Göynük¹⁹⁷ where Akşemseddin and Emir Dede settled after Haji Bayram Wali's death.

After Haji Bayram's death, Akşemseddin emerged as the most prominent one among Haji Bayram's disciples.¹⁹⁸ This celebrated figure was reportedly of Arab stock, born in Syria, and belonged to the lineage of Shihab ad-Din Suhrawardi (writer of *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, d. 632/1234).¹⁹⁹ It is reported that his family moved to Anatolia when Muhammad was a young boy.²⁰⁰ Following a traditional madrasa education, Muhammad became a madrasa teacher in Osmancık.²⁰¹ According to Enisi who authored *Menakıb-i Akşemseddin*²⁰² in 1569, being unable to forget the taste of inward knowledge as he was inclined towards the love of God, Akşemseddin began searching for a shaykh. Lamii

¹⁹⁷ Göynük is a small town located at the mountainous area between Bolu and Ankara. In the *Mir'āt*, it is recorded that Emir Dede was from Göynük and returned to his hometown after Haji Bayram Wali's death. Others remember Emir Dede to be from Bursa.

¹⁹⁸ Tashköprülü-zāde, Lami'i, Mecdi, and 'Atāyī, narrate Akşemseddin's story right after that of Haji Bayram. Also *menakib* literature relating to Akşemseddin pictures him as the foremost disciple of Haji Bayram. (A very useful collection of sources and texts regarding and by Akşemseddin can be found in Yurd's book.)

¹⁹⁹ Lami'i, 684-5, Tashköprülü-zāde, 226-32. On Shihab ad-Din Suhrawardi, see, "al-Suhrawardi, Shihāb al-Dīn Abu Hafs 'Umar" *ET*² (Angelika Hartmann). Shaykh al-Suhrawardi visited to Anatolia as an envoy of the Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir (d. 1225) in order to establish *futuwwa* connections between the caliph and the Saljuki ruler in Anatolia.

²⁰⁰ According to Enisi, Akşemseddin was born in 792/ ca.1390 and his family moved to the region of Kavak in Amasya when he was seven years old. (Yurd, p. 130) Amasya does not have a district known as Kavak today, but it is worth noting that Amasya was the headquarters of Baba Ilyas two centuries ago, and his descendants took residence in the village of Tekke -located between Corum and Amasya- during the time of Elvan Çelebi (d. 760/ 1358-9). Among the names this village was known for was Kavaklı [see "Elvan Celebi Zaviyesi" *TDVİA* (Semavi Eyice)], which might be the place of settlement for Akşemseddin's family and suggest Bābā'ī connections from very early on. The fact that Akşemseddin's family moved from Syria (the area where Baba Ishak was active) to Amasya could also be taken as a sign in this regard. Also see regarding the particularity of this geography, Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Göynük, Ville Refuge des Communautés Baba'ī," in *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen* (Leuven: Res Orientales VI, 1994), 245.

²⁰¹ Lāmi'i, 685; Mecdi, 240. Osmancık is a small town in the district of Çorum today.

²⁰² It was transliterated and published by A. Ihsan Yurd in *Akşemseddin: Hayati ve Eserleri*, 129-89. This is the text used in this dissertation.

reports the story from the mouth of Imam Ali Efendi, a *kazasker*²⁰³ during the reign of Bayezid II (r.1481-1512):

My father was a *murīd* of Haji Bayram and would come together with Akşemseddin regularly. Noticing Akşemseddin's inclination towards the path, my father encouraged him towards Haji Bayram. However Akşemseddin was ashamed to adhere to him, since Haji Bayram and his disciples would sometimes resort to mendicancy for the discipline of self (*kasr nafs icin*). At the time, Shaykh Zayn al-Khāfī's (d. 838/1435)²⁰⁴ reputation had spread to the neighboring countries. Akshemseddin left the madrasa and set out for Arab lands. When his caravan reached Aleppo, Akshemseddin intended to continue his journey towards Shaykh Zayn al-Khāfī after some rest. (However), that night in a vision (*wāqī'a*) he saw himself having a chain around his neck, the other end of which was in the hand of Haji Bayram in Ankara. As soon as he woke up from his vision, he returned to Osmançık."²⁰⁵

The narrative continues by asserting that Akşemseddin met with the father of Imam Ali Efendi there and they set out for the convent in Ankara together.

(When they reached the *tekke*), they found them collaboratively harvesting wheat. Haji Bayram did not show any attention to them. They (Akshemseddin and his friend) also got busy with the work (*khidmat*). Then when it was time to eat, yoghurt and wheaten meal was brought in large troughs. The food was distributed to everybody and even villagers' dogs were given some food. However, Haji Bayram did not show any favor to Akşemseddin and did not invite him to the meal. Modestly Akshemseddin sat next to the food given to the dogs. Seeing this, Haji Bayram stopped showing resistance and said: O *Köse*²⁰⁶, come forward, you have conquered us" and invited him to his own table (*sofra*).

²⁰³ Some information on this *kazasker* Ali Efendi: "He was from Çorum. He was the imam of Bayezid II when he was a *shahzāde* in Amasya. Upon the enthronement of Bayezid II, Ali Effendi was appointed as a *qadi* in Ankara and he taught at Ak Medrese...he was appointed as the Anatolian *kazasker* in 897/1491-2. He was dismissed from this office in 1501 and died in 927/1521 as a blind man." (Bayramoglu, 35, footnote; from Mehmet Sureya, *Sicil-i Osmani*, III, 496).

²⁰⁴ Zayn al-Khāfī was the founder of the Zayniyya order which was quite influential in the Ottoman lands during the ninth/fifteenth century. For more information on him, see "Zain al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Khawāfī" *ET*² (D. S. Margoliouth); H. T. Norris, "The *Mir'at al-Ṭālibīn*, by Zain al-Dīn al-Khawāfī of Khurāsān and Herat," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 53/1 (1990), 57-63; H. J. Kissling, "Einiges Über den Zejnije Orden im Osmanischen Reiche," *Der Islam* 39 (1964), 143-79; Reşat Öngören, *Tarihte Bir Aydın Tarikatı: Zeyniler* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003).

²⁰⁵ Lamii, 685-6.

²⁰⁶ *Köse* is used for men who are naturally beardless.

In this excerpt, we find a glimpse of the life that Haji Bayram and his disciples were leading in the convent. Accordingly, they had an area around the *tekke* for harvesting wheat and they got the work done collaboratively. Even people from surrounding villages turned up in order to help out with the work. It is quite possible that wheat was made into bread and used in other ways in order to feed the dervishes staying in the *tekke*.

Despite coming from the madrasa background, Akşemseddin seems to have fit well within this environment of manual work. In fact, after proving to the shaykh that he was ready to belittle himself in order to proceed in the path, Akşemseddin swiftly became a favorite of Haji Bayram. Enisi relates this anecdote regarding his advancement in the path:

Some people asked Haji Bayram why he gave Akshemseddin succession (*khilāfat*) in such a short time despite refraining from giving authorizations (*ijāza*) to darvishes who worked in his service for forty years. Haji Bayram responded: “He proved to be a smart one. Whatever he saw or heard, he believed; and grasped its reason (*hikmat*) for himself later on. But those dervishes, who have been in the service for the last forty years, ask for the reason and origin of everything they see or hear.”²⁰⁷

Enisi also reports that Akşemseddin located himself in various small towns after receiving the authorization, but found peace in Göynük where he lived until his death.

After he received authorization from Haji Bayram, Akşemseddin was located in Beypazari (a small town close to Ankara). There he built a small mosque and a mill. Then, being disturbed by the amount of attraction he received, he moved to a remote village close to Iskilib (a town in the vicinity of Amasya). Again disturbed by the attention, he moved to Göynük where he built a mosque and a mill.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Yurd, 131.

²⁰⁸ Enisi’s *Manakib Akşemseddin*, in Yurd, 131.

The significance of Akşemseddin for the Bayrami order seems to have been his ability to present the teachings and practices in a respectable manner to the scholarly audience. Akşemseddin penned several treatises in Arabic, some of which were translated by his brother into Turkish. One of them, *Kashif al-Mushkilat*, tries to accommodate the Sufi (more specifically Bayrami) practice within the Islamic authoritative texts.²⁰⁹ From this treatise, we learn that Bayramis recited the Qur'an as well as Turkish mystical poetry (especially from Yunus Emre²¹⁰) in their gatherings; they performed vocal *dhikr* and occasionally shouted and screamed when they experienced ecstasy. They wore black patched garments that were shorter than socially accepted along with quite long headdresses (*börk*); they carried walking-sticks (*'asā*) in their hands and asked money from people on the street to pay for their own or others' debts; they performed retreat (*çile*) for forty days and fasted without eating anything for several days; and theologically they believed in the possibility of seeing God in one's dream and accepted that Muhammad saw God as He is during the ascension (*Mi 'rāḡ*).

The good relations between the Bayramiyya and Murad II seems to have continued during the time of Akşemseddin as the latter was granted significant land in the towns where he settled after leaving Ankara. Once Murad II's son, Mehmed II, ascended

²⁰⁹This *risāla* was written in Arabic in 838/1437 and was translated into Turkish by Akşemseddin's brother, Ali b. Hamza. This Turkish version can be found in Yurd, 205-97. Sometimes it is called *Risāla al-Nūriyya*. According to Curry, this *risāla* was later used by the Khalwatis trying to establish historical and religious justification for their clothing and headgear (Curry, *The Transformation*, 250). Another treatise he wrote was meant to be a defense for Ibn 'Arabi, claiming the latter's writings were not much different in essence from the other respected Sufis. (*Risala al-Nūriyya*, see the information in Yurd, 43-4). One of the treatises attributed to Akşemseddin, *Maqāmāt-i Evliyā*, contains similar ideas with Malāmis on the issue of *walāyat* (Yurd, 329-41). I find it unlikely that it was written by Akşemseddin.

²¹⁰ Yunus Emre is a popular Turkish mystic poet who lived in the second half of the thirteenth and the first quarter of the fourteenth century. See "Yūnus Emre" *EF*² (Edith G. Ambros).

to the throne, on the other hand, Akşemseddin played a significant role as the spiritual advisor of the young sultan during the conquest of Istanbul in 1453.²¹¹

In the *Menakibname-i Akşemseddin*, Enisi reports that some opposed to waging a campaign for Istanbul based on a prophetic hadith. Accordingly, they claimed that Muslims would conquer Istanbul under the banner of the Mahdi marking the arrival of the end of the times.²¹² Akşemseddin stood against the appliance of this hadith to the situation and pointed out that another conquest by the Mahdi might take place in case Istanbul fell back into the hands of the enemies. This idea, states Enisi, was effective in spreading the idea that Istanbul's conquest was possible before the literal appearance of the Mahdi. In another instance, Enisi indicates that Akşemseddin knew the date of the conquest based on *jafr* calculations by making use of the expression found in the Qur'an, *baldatun tayyibatun* (the beautiful city, Q 34:15).²¹³

From various sources we learn that Akşemseddin joined the siege of Istanbul with various other Bayrami dervishes who came to fight in front of the city walls.²¹⁴ In the aftermath of the conquest, on the other hand, Akşemseddin located the unknown burial place of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari²¹⁵ whose tomb quickly turned into one of the most

²¹¹ For information on Mehmed II (r. 848-50/1444-6 and 855-86/1451-81), see "Meşmmed II," *EF* (H. Inalcik).

²¹² This hadith is reported in Ibn Hanbal's *Musnad* and Ibn Al-Kathir's *Kitab al-Nihāya al-Fitan wa al-Malāhim*. See Yurd, 134 and 165.

²¹³ Yurd, 135.

²¹⁴ That Akşemseddin was actively involved in the conquest and consoled the young sultan when there was a leak into the besieged fortress from the Frankish army are evident in the letter he wrote to Mehmed II during the difficult times of the conquest. The letter urges the Sultan to find and punish those who were responsible for the leak from the Byzantines. The letter leaves no question marks that Akşemseddin was invested in the conquest as much as Mehmed II (see the letter in Yurd, 345). According to the *Menakibname*, Shaykh Bedreddin's sons and grandson Khalil contributed to the campaign together with Akşemseddin. (See Golpinarli, *Seyh Bedreddin*. 118-9).

²¹⁵ Abu Ayyub al-Ansari was among the companions of the Prophet and is believed to have hosted him in his house when the prophet immigrated from Makka to Madina. Abu Ayyub had joined the first siege of Istanbul at the time of Umayyads (668-9) and had died in the vicinity of the walls of Istanbul. A mausoleum and a mosque were built upon the location pointed out by Akşemseddin. Today it is still one of

important spiritual centers for the newly established Muslim city. The emergence of this burial place and the mosque built on the periphery helped to present Istanbul as a land of Islam that was blessed by the holy friends of the prophet.

After this service, however, Akşemseddin seems to have left the city in secret without leaving any Bayrami presence there, which is quite odd given the favorable circumstances. In a letter that seems to have been sent to the sultan from Göynük, Akşemseddin explains that his sudden departure was prompted by the wishes of his elderly parents. If the sultan might want to see him, he explains, he would be happy to travel to Istanbul; and that he would be honored if the Sultan decided to visit him in Göynük.²¹⁶ There are, however, no records of them coming together again until Akşemseddin's death. Moreover, Akşemseddin seems to have refused any gifts from Mehmed II after returning to Göynük.²¹⁷ Thus it is possible that Akşemseddin was deeply offended by the young sultan during the course of the campaign, as a result of which he decided to keep away from him.

“Let the Fire Decide”: The Circumstances of the Split

the most favorite visiting places of the religious folk. See “*Abū Aḥmad Khāḍir al-Nadī rī al-Anṣārī*” *ET*² (Lévi-Provençal, E.; Mordtmann, J.H.; Huart, Cl.)

²¹⁶ Yurd, 346. The dislike towards the Sultan might also be detected in Abdurrahim Karahisari (d. 888/1483) who was a disciple of Akşemseddin. He had joined the siege with Akşemseddin and left with him soon afterwards. When he wrote a Sufi treatise by the title *Vahdetname*, he dedicated it not to the Sultan as was the usual custom, but to his *wazīr* Mahmud Pasha. See “Abdurrahim Karahisari” *TDVIA* (Ismail Erünsal).

²¹⁷ According to Enisi, the Sultan's (Murad II?) daughter granted him with rice fields in Beypazari. The source adds Akşemseddin accepted these although he refused endowments from Mehmed II after Istanbul's conquest. (Yurd, 131-2). When a fountain (*cesme*) was built upon Mehmed II's insistence, Akşemseddin expressed his wish that the benefit goes to the aunt of the Sultan, not the Sultan himself. This aunt, sister of Murad II and daughter of Mehmed I, might have been involved in the protection of Shaykh Bedreddin's grandsons as well. See Golpinarli, *Seyh Bedreddin*, 219.

The conflict between Akşemseddin and Emir Dede is recorded in detail in Kafawi's *al-Kataib*, which is, in fact, a tenth/sixteenth-century source on Hanafī jurists of the Ottoman realm.²¹⁸ Here, the author tells the story indicating that he heard it in Göynük. This form of the anecdote was preserved by the Bayrami-Malāmi authors of the later centuries starting with Sarı Abdullah, and followed by Lalizade and Mustakimzade.²¹⁹ The narrative will be provided later, but first we need to clarify that Askeri records the incident of Emir Dede's relinquishment of the Sufi dress without mentioning Akşemseddin's name. Here Askeri tracks the Bayrami-Malāmi *silsila* up to Emir Dede and describes the conditions of the renunciation in this manner:

In the path of Bayramiyya it was Emir Dede Sultan who first relinquished the *tāj* and the *khirka*. The reason for this was that on the night Sultan Haji Bayram passed away, some of his successors offended Emir Dede (*zevkine degmisler*). He said "if being a dervish is about the *tāj* and the *khirka*, we do not want them anymore" and exhibited a miracle. He approached the cooks who were cooking four rams on a single fire. Murmuring "In the Name of God, O secret of Haji Bayram (*bismillāhi yā sirra Haji Bayram*)," he entered the fire and sat in it. The fire caught on his clothes and then his whole body... After some time when he emerged from the fire, his *tāj* and *khirka* were burnt and he was left with a white felt (*çuha*) which was given to him by Haji Bayram... After that Emir Dede's admirers and successors did not wear the Bayrami *tāj*. It is the same even today.²²⁰

As it is clear in the narrative, the incident is described to have taken place in Ankara right after Haji Bayram's death according to 'Askeri. Emir Dede is described to have

²¹⁸ Mahmud b. Sulayman Kafawī (d. 990/1582), *Kata'ib al-'ulam al-akhyar min fuqaha madhhab al-nu'man al-mukhtar*, Suleymaniye Library, Asir Efendi coll., no. 263, 524b-526a. It is interesting that Kafawī was able to hear that story which might mean that he was hanging out with people of Malāmi orientation. In today's Göynük, Akşemseddin is the one that is most well known and most revered. The latter's grave is adjoined with a mosque and is right in the center of the town. Emir Sikkini, on the other hand, is relatively obscure and forgotten, although there is a mausoleum on his grave as well.

²¹⁹ Sarı Abdullah Efendi tells the story without indicating al-Kafawī as his source in *Semerat*, 241-2; Lalizade, 19-21; Mustakimzade, 3b-5a; Mustakimzade quotes it in original Arabic form indicating trustworthiness of the source.

²²⁰ *MI*, 201.

abandoned the Sufi dress as an act of protest against “some successors” who offended him.

In Kafawi’s report, on the other hand, the whole story line changes and deals with the question of who the rightful successor of Haji Bayram was. Here the narrative goes back before the death of Haji Bayram, and describes how Emir Dede was alluded to be the successor:

Shaykh Emir Sikkini received the manner of remembrance of God (*dhikr*) and training (*talkīn*) from Shaykh Hajji Bayram al-Ankaravi. In latter’s supervision, he reached high levels (*maqāmat*) and exhibited miracles. It has been related that when it was about the time of Haji Bayram’s passing, Emir Dede was among the group that gathered around the Shaykh trying to learn to whom he would leave his place. Akşemseddin was sitting on the right side of the Shaykh and nobody dared to precede him. Shaykh Emir Sikkini was sitting among the least-positioned people (*akhariyyāt*). Haji Bayram opened his eyes and said: “Emir, fetch me some water!” As they were all men that day,²²¹ one of the disciples stood up and filled the jug with water. He gave it to Haji Bayram who took the water, and without drinking any, poured it into the plate of fruit that he had next to him. He kept the jug in his hands for a while, then opening his eyes again, said: “Emir, fetch me some water!” One of them stood up and brought some water with the same jug. Haji Bayram, again, poured the water into the fruit plate without drinking any. The next time he said: “Emir, fetch me some water!” and one of the disciples stood up, Akşemseddin, since he was the leader (*muqaddim*) of the group, told everyone to remain in their places and turned to Emir Sikkini saying: “Emir, you get the water”. Emir Sikkini took the jug from the hands of Haji Bayram, filled it with water and gave it to him. It has been told that when Emir Sikkini gave him the water, Haji Bayram drank some of it and then asked Emir Sikkini to drink the rest. Emir drank the rest of it. It has been said that this was the indication of him trusting the secrecy (*sirr*) to Emir Sikkini.²²²

Although historical truth of this story is quite questionable, it is valuable for being filled with subtle indications of the Bayrami-Malāmi worldview. It exhibits the dislike Bayrami-Malāmis had for ostentatious behavior that is represented by Akşemseddin in

²²¹ He seems to be using “Emir ” in reference to a male dervish.

²²² Taken from Mustakimzade, 4a-b; based on Kafawi’s account in Arabic.

this case. Emir Sikkini's humility is contrasted with Akşemseddin's desire to be up on the front. It is his humility that makes Emir Dede the chosen one regardless of his educational background, identity, and upbringing. There is also the element of surprise that puts forth the idea that God's holy men are among the least detectable ones. This idea is repeated quite often in Bayrami-Malāmi writings in connection with the hadith: "My friends are under my tents (cloak); no one knows them except me."²²³

The mythic element of the narrative is also significant and admits to the transmission of the saint's spiritual powers through sharing the same drink. This mythic aura continues as the figure of Emir Sikkini is depicted to have entered the fire without any fear. Kafawi's report continues with a description of this specific incident, which he indicates was an act of defiance against Akşemseddin:

When Haji Bayram died, Akşemseddin acquired his position of guidance (*maqām al-irshād*) and settled in Göynük. Many disciples gathered around him. In the mornings and evenings, they came together in a mosque, remembered God (*dhikr*) in Akşemseddin's circle, greeted each other after the session and then kissed Akşemseddin's hand. Emir Sikkini was sitting in a corner of the mosque and was not joining the circle. Akşemseddin's nature abhorred him. One day he said to Emir Sikkini: "You need to attend our circle like others or I will take shaykh's *tāj* from you." Emir said: "Is that so?" Akşemseddin replied: "yes." Emir Sikkini continued: "If you are certain (you want to do that), come to our house after Friday prayer and I will give you the *tāj* and the *khirka*."²²⁴

Here again Akşemseddin is pictured as a figure of ostentation, also the figure representing the settled Sufism of the *dhikr* and the ritual, while Emir Dede is described to be the freewheeling dervish who cannot be contained in these restrictive practices. Kafawi's report for the rest of the incident is almost identical with that of 'Askeri's. At the time of their meeting, Emir Sikkini puts together a fire in the vicinity of his house and

²²³ "Awliyā'ī taḥta qibābī (qābāī) lā ya 'rifuhum ghayrī," see Furuzanfar, *Aḥadīth-i Masnavi*, 52, no. 131.

²²⁴ Mustakimzade, 4b.

enters it without any fear. When he comes out, the *tāj* and *khirka* are burnt but there is no trace of harm on his body. The main difference in this version is that the whole drama takes place in front of Akşemseddin and his disciples, teaching them a lesson regarding the real nature of men of God.

It is significant that the whole Melami criticism of Sufi pretension in clothing and ritual seems to be the main inspiration for the narrative. Thus Akşemseddin is reduced to a synthetic figure who desires to be renowned and respected by donning the Sufi dress, while Emir Dede turns this whole scheme upside down by showcasing that in his abandonment of the *dhikr*, he has reached higher status and more miraculous power than Akşemseddin.

Regarding the Town of Göynük

As it has been mentioned, Kafawi remarks that he heard this story passing through Göynük in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Thus residents of Göynük seem to have played an important role in constructing this narrative around Emir Dede. This situation gains a significant dimension thanks to a meticulous study by the historian Irene Beldicaneu-Steinherr who researched Göynük's population based on an Ottoman tax survey of 1487. According to this, a considerable amount of residents in Göynük were in fact remnants from the Baba'î revolution.²²⁵ Furthermore, Göynük seems to have been

²²⁵ Baba'î revolution of the thirteenth century in Anatolia is a very interesting example of Sufis taking on military activity. This rebellion is associated with the figure of Baba Ilyas (d. 638/1240) who had come to Anatolia from Khurasan settling in the village of Çat near Amasya.²²⁵ Falling out of favor with the Saljuki Sultan, Baba Ilyas had to take refuge in the castle of Amasya in order to escape persecution. It was at this

known by the circle around Shaykh Bedreddin, as his sons became Akşemseddin's disciples and resided in Göynük for quite some time.

By suggesting that all these occurrences in Göynük could not be a simple coincidence, Steinherr summarizes her findings in this vein:

An Ottoman tax survey of 1487 shows that two quarters (of Göynük) bear their name (*maḥalle-i Bābā'ī*). Another quarter derives its name from Akşemseddin who was one of the famous followers of Haji Bayram. On the other hand we know that there were links between Akşemseddin and Shaykh Bedreddin who was accused by the Ottomans to have stirred up the population and was executed in 1416. The tax survey shows that there is a connection between the Bābā'ī, the Bayramī, the sympathizers of Bedreddin, but it is difficult to establish its nature. We can presume that they lived not only together, but they were sharing the same ideas.²²⁶

Steinherr's suggestion that there is some common element between Bayramis, Baba'is, and sympathizers of Bedreddin—all of whom somehow came together in Göynük—is quite valuable for our understanding of the roots of Bayrami-Malāmiyya. It seems that Sufi revolutionary ideas of the previous centuries had significant impact in the formation of the Bayrami-Malāmi branch, which sustained these roots well into the seventeenth century. In this conjunction, we should note that narratives parallel to the episode of entering into the fire without any bodily harm can be found in the narratives of

time that one of his prominent disciples, Baba Ishak, revolted against the Saljuks in Syria and travelled to Amasya reportedly against the wishes of the latter. When Ilyas refused to see him, Ishak moved with his mostly nomadic supporters, who had by then increased significantly in number, to the vicinity of Kırşehir. He successively defied several large Saljukid armies, and was only finally defeated and captured by the employment of "Frankish" mercenaries; even then the movement was not completely suppressed. Baba Ilyas, himself, was believed to have mounted his white horse and ascended to the sky during the battle; no trace of him could be found after this point. See Karamustafa, "Early Sufism in Eastern Anatolia," 179-80. On this revolution, see "Bābā'ī" *EL*² (Cl. Cahen); A. Yasar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı: Alevîliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı yahut Anadolu'da İslam-Türk Heteroksisinin Teşekkülü* (Dergâh Yayınları: İstanbul, 2000); Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. Gary Leiser (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 51-3. It is unfortunate that Baba'ī activity has heavily been studied in the context of Turkoman opposition against the Saljuki authority and Baba'ī leaders have been described as Turkoman shamans under the guise of Sufi dressing. For an insightful review and critique of this stand, and endeavor to harmonize the Baba'ī movement with the overall Sufi imagery, see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Early Sufism in Eastern Anatolia." In *The Heritage of Sufism I*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 175-98.

²²⁶ Steinherr, abstract, 255.

abdals and Bektashis, traditions which are understood to have been related to the Baba'i networks.²²⁷

Perhaps a more significant clue regarding Emir Dede should be sought in his letting go of the Sufi attire as an act of protest. This form of behavior coincides with *qalandari* leanings, which register the social protest in the form of denouncing the proper attire. As Karamustafa notes, some *qalandars* went naked, while others adopted the woolen or felt cloak, black or white. The same principle was applied to headgear as well; the *qalandars* registered their protest in headgear, either by not wearing any, or by designing distinctive hats.²²⁸ Thus the story of Emir Dede mirroring the victory of the ecstatic antinomian darvish over the settled portentous Sufi saint might be most meaningful in a *qalandari* context, where Emir Dede is breaking away from Akşemseddin's institutional Sufism.

In this sense we might be able to benefit from the illustration employed by Karamustafa who makes sense of the relationship between the institutionalized Sufism and the *qalandariyya* in terms of a complex bond between "socially conformist" parents and their "rebellious" offspring. Thus his following observation might be applied to the case of Bayramiyya, and its offshoot, Bayrami-Malāmiyya:

Although the dervishes (*qalandars*) vociferously rejected the main features of institutional Sufism, in the final analysis they could not help but retain essentially Sufi beliefs and practices. The *tariqah* determined the general pattern and shape of its shadow counterpart, the dervish (*qalandar*) group. The latter was a mirror image, in its negation, of the former. Thus, the general structure of the loose dervish group, complete with eponymous

²²⁷ In *MM*, 42, Golpinarli gives the example of Sarı Saltuk who entered the fire and came out uninjured to prove his case against a Christian priest. Similar examples are found in the *Vilayetname*. See A. Gölpınarlı, *Vilāyetname: Menākib-i Hünkār Hacı Bektāş-i Veli* (Istanbul: Inkilap Yay., 1995) 41 and 44. Also see Karamustafa, *Unruly Friends*, 60. Here Ibn Battuta (d. ca. 1369) reports witnessing a *qalandar* dancing in the fire and his shirt remaining intact.

²²⁸ Karamustafa, *Unruly Friends*, 18-9. Also see Watenpaugh, 541.

master, actual leader, distinctive apparel, and paraphernalia as well as peculiar practices, reflected the structure of the *tariqah*.²²⁹

In the same vein, followers of Emir Dede, who came to be known as Bayrami-Malāmis, mirrored the overall Bayrami structure and belief system. Perhaps due to the conditions of the time, they did not choose to completely deviate from the norm, i.e. there was little change in their appearance and social status. They let go of the Sufi dress, but not choose to appear in eccentric clothing in the vein of the *qalandar*. They are also reported to have held permanent occupations as artisans, which point out to their leading steady lives. Thus a more discreet approach is apparent in the case of Bayrami-Malāmiyya, which might be alluding to the *qalandari* darvish being redefined in new ways.

Bünyamin Ayaşi (d. 918/1513?)

After Emir Dede, Melami *silsila* continues with Bünyamin (Ibn Yamin) Ayaşi.²³⁰ There is not much information regarding this Melami *pīr* and even his date of death is quite debatable. In the aforementioned text of Kafawi, he is remembered in these terms: “Emir Sikkini had one successor who was Shaykh Ibn Yamin. He lived in the town of Ayaş in the vicinity of Ankara. He died there in the beginning of the rule of Sultan Selim bin Sultan Bayezid Han in 918 (1513).” However, a century later, ‘Atayī, notes his date of death as 926 (ca. 1520).²³¹ Sarı Abdullah, in his *Semerat* assumes that the latter was alive during the reign of Sulayman I (r.1520-1566) and was imprisoned in Kütahya for

²²⁹ Ibid, 91-2.

²³⁰ He lived in Ayas and is buried there today. There is small mosque standing over his tomb. On Ayasi, see “Bünyāmin Ayāşī” *TDVİA* (Kamil Şahin); *MM* 42-3; *ZM*, 268-70; *Semerat*, 245-6; ‘Atāyī, 65, 89, 463.

²³¹ ‘Atāyī, 65.

some time.²³² The point of the story here might be taken as confirmation of Bünyamin's spiritual powers rather than a historic account of his life. Therefore one might take the earliest source, al-Kafawi, as more authoritative and accept Ibn Yamin's date of death as 918/1513.

'Askeri, on the other hand, provides valuable information on Bünyamin without giving any dates:

... (Ibn Yamin) was from the family of the prophet (*āl-i rasūl*). He was of the temperament of *abdals* (*budelā-meşreb*) and was hiding himself (*pinhan yururlermis*). (Reportedly) like travelers from Iran, he used to make a hole in a felt and wrap it up around his head. During his time of guidance, he also wore a turban (*shamla*).²³³ His occupation was wool-roving (*sof tarağı*).²³⁴

'Askeri, again, proves to be a precious source, as he provides details which are not found in other sources. Bünyamin's description as being an *abdal* in character might be pointing out to *qalandari* tendencies. Bünyamin, however, like his master, seems to have kept a job, and led a settled life. It is difficult to know, however, what exactly Bünyamin's activities were, and what kind of relations he was able to establish.

Conclusion

In this chapter, early decades of the Bayrami Sufi order were examined and biographies of Hamideddin Aksarayi and Haji Bayram Wali were reevaluated based on the information provided by the Bayrami-Malāmi writings. Accordingly, they were

²³² *Semerat*, 246. *Semerat*'s account is concluded by Sultan's admission of the shaykh's spiritual power. Sulayman I is told that Rhodos could not be conquered because he was keeping Bünyamin in prison. As soon as he orders Bünyamin to be freed, Rhodos is conquered (in 1522).

²³³ *Shamla* (*semle*) is an Arabic term, equivalent of *sarık* in Turkish. In Arabic, it might refer to a piece of cloth or headdress made from felt. (*OTDTS*, III, 334.)

²³⁴ *MI*, 201.

portrayed differently from the way they are usually depicted in the classical Ottoman biographical dictionaries.

In the light of Askeri's *Mir'at*, this chapter questioned the madrasa background of Haji Bayram, and his mentor Hamideddin Aksarayi. According to Askeri's account, Aksarayi was more of a dervish with freewheeling attitude (*budalā-meşreb*), and was careful to rely on his own manual work rather than relying on endowments from ruling families. He advised his disciple Haji Bayram to live on similar terms when the latter moved to his new place of settlement in Ankara. Haji Bayram and his dervishes gained their livelihood by growing wheat and asking for alms on the streets for a while, but eventually Haji Bayram established a close relationship with the Ottoman ruler of the time, Murad II. As this relationship grew closer, Haji Bayram encouraged his dervishes to take part in expeditions (*ghāza*) led by the Ottoman ruler. The latter, on the other hand, endowed Haji Bayram with large areas of *waqf* in Ankara, and offered his adherents privileges in their taxes.

By the time Haji Bayram died, he was a well-established saint in Anatolia. Various successors spread all over Anatolia claiming to be the inheritors of his charisma. Among these, Akşemseddin emerged as a significant persona who preserved Haji Bayram's connections with the ruling Ottoman family. He was also a scholar who wrote in Arabic defending practices of the Bayrami Sufi order. Despite this, he chose to live in small Anatolian towns and did not move into the newly emerging Ottoman cities of Istanbul, Bursa, or Edirne.

It seems that Akşemseddin spent the last decades of his life in the small town of Göynük, being accompanied by various Bayrami dervishes. Among these was Emir Dede,

who is depicted as a freewheeling dervish who did not see much benefit in the established forms of Sufi rituals, clothes, and designations. Narratives emerging from Göynük during the sixteenth century describe Emir Dede as the rightful successor of Haji Bayram and depict Akşemseddin as a pompous shaykh overly concerned with the formalities of Sufi behavior. Accordingly, when Emir Dede opposed to the ways of the latter, he solved the conflict in his own terms by entering a fire with his Sufi clothing. Emir Dede emerged from the fire unharmed, but had lost his Sufi clothing in the fire. Thus he gained victory over Akşemseddin by proving that it is not the Sufi clothing that protects one, but the state of one's own spiritual consciousness.

It was in terms of this incident that Bayrami-Malāmis aligned themselves with refusing to wear the Bayrami *tāj* and *khirka*. Eventually a distinct Bayrami-Malāmi genealogy appeared, claiming Ibn Yamin Ayaşi to be the successor of Emir Dede.

I understand the emergence of the Bayrami-Malāmiyya in terms of *qalandari* tendencies that were indigenous to the beginnings of the Bayramiyya. I explain how it is likely that among the adherents of Haji Bayram were some *qalandari* dervishes, who are remembered by classical sources as holy fools (*majdhūb*). These dervishes upheld ideals that questioned the ways of the established Sufi behavior as well as the mainstream forms of Islamic piety. By following Karamustafa's observations regarding the break-up of *qalandari* groups from within institutional Sufi orders, I suggest that the Bayrami-Malāmiyya became a mirror image of the Bayramiyya, complete with eponymous master, actual leader and peculiar practices. The ways in which it reflected the structure of the *ṭarīqa* will become more apparent in the next chapter thanks to Askeri's detailed accounts regarding Pir Ali Aksarayi and the lifestyle he led.

Chapter 3. Circumstances of The Conflict with the State

The Rise of Pir Ali Aksarayi

One of the defining figures of the Melami *silsila* was certainly Pir Ali of Aksaray (d. 945/1539)²³⁵ during whose time the Bayrami-Malāmis seem to have solidified their teachings and engaged in active missionizing. The most detailed reports regarding Pir Ali and his teachings can be found in ‘Askeri’s *Mir’atu’ l-‘ishk*. Therefore most of this section will be written based on this extraordinarily vivid account.

We gather from *Mir’atu’ l-‘ishk* that the author, Abdurrahman Askeri, was raised in a well-to-do and well-educated family. His father seems to have had Sufi leanings as he advised his son to search for divine love before he died.²³⁶ It is probably thanks to his

²³⁵ Information on Pir Ali can be found in “Pīr Ali Aksarāyī” *TDVİA* (Haşim Şahin); *MM*, 43-7; *ZM*, 270-89; ‘Atāyī, 65; *Semerat*, 246-9; Lalizade, 23-26; Mustakimzade, 10b-13b.

²³⁶ This key moment for understanding Askeri’s psychology and background is retained in *MI* in this manner: “When he was about to pass away from this world of images, my late father called for me and gave me some advice. I was a young child then. One of his advices was that: ‘My son, be pious and continue on your worship. But know that the state (*hāl*), that is characteristic of men of God, is not necessarily the result of worship and righteousness. It is a different thing. You cannot do with it and you

father's library that Askeri was quite knowledgeable as regards to the Sufi literature in Persian and Arabic. Askeri's background is also recognizable in the embellished Turkish he employs and many Arabic and Persian excerpts and terms that he makes use of quite often in his writing.

'Askeri lived in Istanbul and quite possibly was a shop-owner.²³⁷ He became a disciple of Pir Ali Dede when the latter began sending representatives to Istanbul in order to spread his teachings. Between the years 939/1533 (Askeri's conversion) and 945/1539 (Pir Ali's death), 'Askeri seems to have visited the shaykh in Aksaray on several occasions. Although he does not clearly state the frequency and length of his visits, he refers to three specific occasions during which he was in Aksaray. Therefore 'Askeri had quite many chances to observe the rhythm of life around the hospice and his report is extremely beneficial.

On the other hand, 'Askeri was writing at a time when being a disciple of Pir Ali could be quite dangerous. This is evidenced in documents asking for the arrest of one of his adherents in Istanbul, nearly two decades after his son Ismail Maşuki's execution.²³⁸ Therefore it should not be a far-fetched idea that Askeri tries to present Pir Ali in the best light possible, trying to reduce his involvement with the execution of Ismail Maşuki as much as possible.

cannot do without it. It is the fruit of love (*muhabbet*), and is caused by men of God. It is a mystery of the entrustment (*sirr-i emanet*) and yet, worship and piety are its necessities... Oh my son, do not be inattentive to love, so you know it when it happens to you.' ” (*MI*, 147)

²³⁷ He never talks about his occupation or that of his father. At the same time, he makes it clear that he joined Pir Ali Dede's circle with a group of shop-owners and people of craftsmanship. (*MI*, 218) He is also careful to note down the craft of each Malāmi shaykh, which shows certain attentiveness to the world of artisanry.

²³⁸ An imperial order was sent to the *qāḍī* of Üsküdar regarding the arrest of a disciple of Oğlan shaykh's father. It is dated 967/1559. See the document in Refik, *Rafizilik ve Bektaşilik*, 17.

According to Askeri, Pir Ali's first representative, Baba Hasan, arrived in Istanbul in 939/1533 and stayed there for two months. After his return, another dervish, Nebi Sufi, was sent to Istanbul and stayed there for about four months.²³⁹ Presumably Askeri became attached to the group during this time period as he is filled with praise for Nebi Sufi.

Nebi Sufi was quite obedient to shari'a (*mutasharri'*). He was also a pleasing person. His loyal lovers (*'āshiqān-i ṣādiqān*) were ecstatic and intoxicated (*mast u majdhūb*), (and yet) were nurtured by the law (*shar'*). When secrets of the desire (*'ishk*) brightened their hearts, they would experience ardor and taste, unveiling and inspiration. They would advance quickly in their voyage and exhibit miracles.²⁴⁰

When Nebi Sufi returned to Aksaray, forty adherents from Istanbul joined him in his journey back.²⁴¹ Among them was the author, 'Askeri, and his prospective shaykh, Ahmed al-Edirnevi (d.1000/1591).²⁴² It was during the year 940/1534 that they reached Aksaray and stayed in Pir Ali's hospice for seventeen days.²⁴³ The author describes circumstances of this trip in the context of 'Attar's famous work, *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr*, and compares the meeting with Pir Ali as "laying eyes on the *Simurg-i 'ishq*."²⁴⁴ He describes the joy felt both by Pir Ali and the adherents when they met.

²³⁹ *MI*, 205-6.

²⁴⁰ *MI*, 206.

²⁴¹ The number forty indicates symbolical importance of this group (See *MI*, 212). Forty is the holy number of dervishes that are the most significant in the spiritual ladder. See "Walī, 1. General Survey" EI² (P. Lory).

²⁴² After Pir Ali Dede, Askeri pledges allegiance to Ahmed Edirnevi who seems to have been a sober dervish and a careful follower of shari'a. One of the main points of 'Askeri's treatise is to prove that the rightful successor of Ali Aksarayi was Ahmed Edirnevi, not Ismail Maşuki. Ahmed Edirnevi was from the town of Saruhan, a town in the vicinity of Manisa. He lost his parents as a small child and was raised by his uncle who taught him the art of shoemaking. When Ahmed reached the age of seventeen, he visited Istanbul, and then settled there at the age of thirty. Later he moved to Edirne presumably under the authorization of Pir Ali Aksarayi. (*MI*, 230, also see 'Atāyi, 65.)

²⁴³ *MI*, 206 and 212.

²⁴⁴ In *Manṭik al-Ṭayr*, 'Attar (ca.627/1230) tells the story of various birds embarking on a journey to meet the Holy King (*Simurgh*—the mythological phoenix). All but thirty perish on the path and when they finally lay eyes on Simurgh after a long difficult journey, they realize deity is nothing else than their own collective selves (*si-murgh*: thirty birds).

...(we were ecstatic to meet with the king of gnostics (*sultān al-‘arīfīn*)... seeing us in this condition, he looked at us with a look of mercy and benevolence, and brought us to our senses. He embraced us as his most beloved ones, complimented and consoled each one of us. He accompanied us to the hospice and shown us some space there, and then brought us to the secluded area (*khalwat-khane*). We, men intoxicated with the wine of divine love, sat down in accordance with the principle of “The most favorable of you are the ones that were the most favorable in *jāhiliyya*”.²⁴⁵ The king of reality and meaning (*sultān -i mülk u ma‘nā*—Pir Ali Aksarayi), chose to sit in the back line in accordance with the principle of “the rulers of a society are its servants”.²⁴⁶

As can be seen from this passage, Ali Aksarayi was quite pleased to have them in the hospice and made every effort to make them feel welcome. It is rather surprising to see that ‘Askeri took time to explain the specific bit of information regarding the sitting arrangement. Seemingly the newly-arrived disciples were careful to preserve the rules of society and they sat down in accordance with their social status. Pir Ali, on the other hand, breaking with the rules of the society, chose to sit in the back, close to the area where shoes were left as people came in. This was a clear sign of self-negation and humility, which are quite important according to the Melami worldview.²⁴⁷

Not surprisingly, ‘Askeri shows his devotion to Pir Ali Dede in many pages of his treatise as the latter was the model of the perfect human being (*insān kāmil*) in his eyes.

²⁴⁵ A hadith found in Ahmad b. Hanbal’s *Musnad*. (II, no. 257) *Jāhiliyya* (time of ignorance) refers to the time period before the advent of Islam. In the text, the author refers to the time period that was before they became followers of Pir Ali Aksarayi.

²⁴⁶ This is a loose translation of the passage in *MI*, 207-8.

²⁴⁷ This negation of the self, however, should be taken with a grain of salt and contrasted with exaggerated titles Askeri uses for Pir Ali. Among others, Askeri refers to him as the “*shah-i velayet*”, “*sultan al-‘arīfīn*”, and “*sultan-i mülk u ma‘nā*”. While this is partly due to the embellished style ‘Askeri uses in his treatise, it is also a reflection of the Malāmi teaching that places *pir* on a cosmological level of importance as the center of the universe. For the outsider, this contradiction between the outward humility of the *pīr* and the inward dominance of his status might be deemed as pretentious; however, for the insider, it was a sensible ideal that the more exalted the *pīr* was, the more unassuming he appeared. Moreover, this ideal encouraged disciples to let go off the social dictations that regulated their lives and look at the world from the new angle that they had been introduced by Pir Ali.

Thanks to this devotion, it is possible to hear the teachings from the mouth of Pir Ali as Askeri noted them down. Some of these notes regarding the nature of the path include:

Sultān al-‘arīfīn said: Our path is the path of Truth (*Hakk*), and is the path of divine love (*‘ishk*). The head of divine love is ‘Ali.²⁴⁸ Our shepherd is Aziz Veysi.²⁴⁹ Our mediator is the soul of Mustafa (pbuh). The law (*shari‘a*) is our action, the path (*tarīkat*) is our saying, and the reality (*hakīkat*) is our state.²⁵⁰

Many other notes are found on the principle of desire (*‘ishq*) as the main character of this path:

Sultān al-‘arīfīn Shaykh Alaeddin Aksarayi said: “our path is the path of *‘ishk*. Progress in this path is through preserving ecstasy (*cezbe*) and gaining His blessing (*feyz*)... this is so since the time of the prophet. It is an entrusted secret.”

Despite this characterization of the path with ecstasy, ‘Askeri also makes it clear that *shari‘a* was observed in the path:

(Pir Ali said) “Do not change your outward, but rather change your inward. Adorn yourselves with good qualities and *shari‘a*. If you want continuity in the secrets that are manifested to you and in the states that you experienced, do not abandon *shari‘a* ... those who came before us have said: “If it is one of our two eyes that is not obedient to *shari‘a*, we take it out.” This wretched person (Pir Ali) also says the same thing ... I do not want deviation (*ilhād*) creeping into my path.”²⁵¹

In ‘Askeri’s perception, the path of Pir Ali represented a truthful way among other Sufi ways that had gone wrong. After relating a passage in praise of Sufis from al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111), ‘Askeri notes:

“... in our time, however, Sufis have increased in number. Most of them have become obsessed with appearances. Those pretentious people whirl

²⁴⁸ ‘Ali was the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. He is also the head of most Sufi genealogies.

Bayramis traced themselves back to ‘Ali through the Khalwati *silsila* as discussed in the previous chapter.

²⁴⁹ Aziz Veysi is *Uways al-QarVey*, a semi-legendary figure who was a contemporary of the prophet and corresponded with him by telepathy. See “Uways al-Karanī” *EF*² (J. Baldick). In the context of the text, Pir Ali refers to him to indicate that he can guide and control his disciples from afar since he has the kind of spiritual power that enabled prophet communicate with Uways.

²⁵⁰ *MI*, 193.

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, 194.

in various kinds of robes. Most of them are obsessed with appearances and are thieves of it ... They boast with miracles that they appear to have, prefer fame (*qāl*) over the real state (*hāl*), snatch stories from *menākib* books and present these to the public as their own.”²⁵²

For him, these pretentious Sufis present one extreme, while others, who have fallen into deviation by abandoning the shari‘a, present the other.

“On the other hand, some heretics (*malāhida*) wander around bearing their chest and shaving their face and head (*mū-be-ser*) in the appearance of a *Mevlevi*.²⁵³ They have become the laughing stock of notables (*akābir*). Men of God have called them the “outlays of Satan” since these people did away with the shari‘a, have gone into deviance (*ilhād*) and divulgence (*ibāha*) by saying “there is nothing in creation other than Him (*mā fī al-kawn illā Hū*).”²⁵⁴

For Askeri, this last group has gone wrong by abandoning propriety (*adab*). Sufis, for him, should preserve good manners as vital extensions of the shari‘a. He notes a well-known phrase to make his point: “Sufism, the whole of it, is nothing more than good manners of shari‘a.”

While ‘Askeri is quite insistent that dervishes around Pir Ali kept up with the shari‘a, he also acknowledges that when they went into ecstasy for a period of time, dervishes were absolved of their ritualistic responsibilities.

The state of trance (*istighrāk*) is well known among gnostics and perfect ones. It is peculiar to the distinguished saints and is a sign of the pole of the universe (*kutb-i ‘ālem*). It is a gift and a special divine unveiling granted through divine blessing. Since the human body is not able to bear it, those who attain this annihilation become ecstatic and need to lie down for a while. They become unable to eat or drink. (During that time) they either receive unveiling of fine secrets or get a taste of divine truths. Sometimes they pray, sometimes they praise. They might exhibit intoxicated revelry, or go completely silent that those who see them think they are dead. (In this state) they are not aware of what is expected of them. Sometimes they come to their senses and perform the necessary

²⁵² Ibid, 24-25.

²⁵³ This might be related to the branch of Shamsiyya within the Mevlevis, a group which resembled the *qalandars* in attitude. See “Kalandariyya” *EF*² (T. Yazici).

²⁵⁴ *MI*, 25.

rituals (*ferā'iz*) and then lose themselves again. They are drunken and excused for all their doings; however, they are at the culmination of perfection in this state and have become objects of divine unveiling ... Those who see them think that they are sick. Knowers (*ārifūn*) of the secrets and servants of the convent are aware of the trance, but they do not reveal the secret and tell ordinary people that they are sick.”²⁵⁵

He also notes that Pir Ali and his subsequent shaykh, Ahmed al-Edirnevi, both went through such trances:

(Pir Ali)... many times he would go into trance and lay down intoxicated and unconscious. Sometimes this would last for twenty-five days, sometimes fifteen to twenty days. They would say “he went into trance for seven times”. The perfect ones that were there and he himself would say that it mostly happened during the spring (*gūl fasli*) and that due to excessive spiritual ardor and taste, he became rapturous, ecstatic and intoxicated. Elders who attended to him would know about the secret and would not let in anyone who came to visit him. They would say to those who came to visit (thinking he is sick): “Now is not the time, come back later.” They did not want them to gossip and reveal the truths. When Pir Ali came back to himself, he would perform his necessary rituals (*ferā'iz*), and then would go back into trance for days. Again visitors would not be accepted as ordinary people are not worthy of hearing the secrets.”²⁵⁶

Clearly, for ‘Askeri, such rapturous experiences were bestowed upon chosen ones from God and the fact that Pir Ali experienced these states was a sign of truthfulness in his claims as the ultimate saint of God. How could anyone claim sainthood without experiencing such loaded moments of intimacy with the divine? The real *pīr* not only had to go through such states, but he had to make it possible for his disciples to go through similar experiences.

Sometimes he (Pir Ali) would say “today we are having silent *dhikr*. (By the end of the *dhikr*) nobody among those sitting in the circle would be able to sit anymore. They would all experience ecstasy (*mest*) and would fall down in their places.”²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 185-6.

²⁵⁶ Ibid, 187.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, 196.

It is possible that this was the kind of ecstasy that was attracting people to Pir Ali. According to Askeri, although such silent *dhikr* circles were held at the *dergāh*, the disciples were not expected to follow a scheduled program of repetitive *dhikr*. Askeri notes that the practice of repeating various names of God certain number of times did not exist among the saints.²⁵⁸ In a similar way, Pir Ali did not follow the custom of wearing Sufi garments.

He said: “Men of God (*ahl-Allah*) have abandoned *tāj* and *khirka*, and chose to appear the same with regular people. You also do not change your appearances.” He himself did not look any different from regular people. Nobody would recognize (his Sufi loyalties) based on his appearance.²⁵⁹

As a consequence of the same idea, he was also against building Sufi convents under the auspices of the Sultan or other wealthy patrons:

He did not approve of the convents and hospices (*tekke ve hankāh*). “Saints do not eat from the *waqf*-land, you also do not do that” he used to say. He, however, would accept the things that people brought as charity ... Reminding us that the prophet would not reject or drive people away, he would also not turn down the right of God (*Haqq-Allah*). Food was abundant and his offerings were plentiful. Whoever came, whether Zoroastrian, Christian, or Muslim, was accepted, welcomed, and served with some food. It has been said: “Serve your guests even if they are infidels”. Sharing the meal (*sofra*) is inherited from ‘Ali and generosity is from the glory of the saints. He was qualified with the best manners. He used to say: “Everything cannot be told to everybody; or you might cause sorrow in people’s hearts.” You may compare his other manners to this and understand what a perfect human being he was.²⁶⁰

From the last comments, we gather that Pir Ali made sure that his visitors were taken care of and left with good impressions. From his cautionary remarks against the *waqf*-land, we can deduce that the hospice was built possibly on Pir Ali’s own land, right

²⁵⁸ Ibid, 144. “*Erenler icinde asla aded ile tesbīhāt ve tahlīlāt etmek yoktur.*”

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 194-5; also in pages 114-5, Askeri describes coming together with Haji Bayrami Wali’s descendants in Edirne for a Bayrami gathering, during which they were questioned for not wearing the Bayrami attire and supporting different ideas.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 196-7. This is a simplified translation.

next to his home. It seems to have been maintained thorough donations, which were welcomed as long as they were from regular folk. Considering the connection with shop-owners and traders, donations must have reached to a considerable degree. Any sponsorship from and any involvement with the court, however, was avoided.

One of the most important contributions of Askeri's account is that it sheds some light unto the *futuwwa* connections and traditions of the group. It has been already stated that 'Askeri gives us some insight into the audience of Pir Ali's teachings, and indicates that they were mostly artisans.²⁶¹ One of the most intriguing scenes of the book is when he describes the girdling ceremony regarding which Pir Ali says: "it is an honor (*'izzet*) and guidance (*hidayet*); and it happens at the door of the real saints. All saints have gone through this ceremony. Even this wretched destitute (Pir Ali) has stood before our *pîr* for it."²⁶²

According to this account, this ceremony seems to have been regarded as a testimony of rightful successorship among the dervishes. For 'Askeri, it meant that Pir Ali had appointed Ahmed Edirnevi as his successor. This is how he describes the manner in which this ceremony took place:

Pir Ali asked one of his dervishes (Edhem Sofî) to come forward. The dervish came forward, loosened the girdle around Ahmed Edirnevi's waist and put it in front of Pir Ali. The latter took the girdle in his hand, and looked at it for a while. Then he took the girdle, whispered *lā ilāha illā Allāh (ism-i celāl etmek)* and then knotted it into the shape of *mim* (representing Muhammad), then *'ayn* (representing 'Ali). On the strand of 'Ali he made *zulfikar* (pulled the edge into two strips representing 'Ali's famous sword) and continued to look at it for a while. Then he prayed: "May God be your helper and may the light of Muhammad be apparent to you through the secret of 'Ali. May Aziz Veys be your

²⁶¹ *MI*, 218. Concerning the adherents in Istanbul: "*Cemi'an ehl-i dukkân ve ehl-i hirefidiler.*"

²⁶² *Ibid*, 233. (The word translated as covenant is *peymançe*. See the next section for further explanation on this concept.)

shepherd and Khidr²⁶³ be your companion. May the men of the unseen (*rijāl al-ghayb*), all of them, be your friends and associates. May your future be more fruitful than your past (*Önünden sonun ziyāde olsun*). May it be abundant but not insufficient; may it exceed but not spill over.” He praised God (*takbīr*) and then asked the dervish to put the girdle back on Ahmed Edirnevi’s waist. Edhem Sofi came forward, praised God (*takbīr*) and took the girdle from the sight of Pir Ali and put it back on Ahmed Edirnevi. Everybody praised God. Pir Ali prayed again and said the *Gülbank-i Muhammadī*.²⁶⁴ He said: “May it be sanctified. Among saints, since time immemorial, permission and authorization (*izn u icazet*) take place through the standard (*tuğ*), the girdle (*shad*), and the drum (*kudūm*).²⁶⁵ This is what we can do for you. From now on, you bestow the standard and the girdle; this is the permission.” Pir Ahmed put his head on the ground and prostrated before Pir Ali; then he greeted and shook hands with elders and *ahl al-bayt*²⁶⁶ ... Pir Ali prayed for everybody in the group and said: “you are all fellow-members (*miyān-beste*).²⁶⁷ Be cautious with regards to the circle you belong. Do not exceed the limits (of your position) and do not stoop from it.” All dervishes came one by one, put their heads down before Pir Ali and kissed his hand. The assembly was completed.”²⁶⁸

This whole ceremony is quite similar to the initiation ceremonies that took place in *futuwwa* guilds.²⁶⁹ In many respects, this account provides a picture of how Sufi shaykhs and *futuwwa* guilds were associated closely. In another context, ‘Askeri also mentions a contemporary Akhi Baba who resided in Kayseri, and was associated with the

²⁶³ Khidr (meaning “the green”) is a popular figure associated with the Qur’anic story in 18:59-81. A rich folkloric aura was developed around him in Asian Muslim societies. See “Al-Khādir (al-Khidr)” EI² (A. J. Wensinck); “Kezî” *Elr* (Anna Krasnowolska).

²⁶⁴ *Gülbanks* were prayers that were said in a group collectively. They were common in most Sufi orders during communal ceremonies. They are, however, mostly associated with Bektashi rituals as they had certain *gülbanks* for each occasion. The Ottoman army, comprised of Bektashi *Yanicharis*, also used these kinds of prayers before and during the battle. “Gülbank”, *TDVİA* (Mustafa Uzun); *OTDTS* I, 683-685; Mustafa Uzun, “Türk Tasavvuf Edebiyatında Bir Dua ve Niyaz Tarzı Gülbank”, in *Tasavvuf Kitabı*, ed. Cemil Çiftçi, 241-61.

²⁶⁵ These were symbolic signs of *futuwwa* organizations.

²⁶⁶ *Ahl al-bayt*, in general, refers to the family of Prophet Muhammad. From the usage in this text, we might assume that various men known to be *sayyids* were involved in the circle.

²⁶⁷ *Miyān-beste* is described to be a degree within the *futuwwa* organizations. It was the third degree after the beginner (*nāzil*) (in the ninth degree, was placed the *shayk al-shuyūkh*). *Miyān-beste* seems to refer to the simple adherent of the circle, one who knew about the teachings and rituals, but did not hold a specific rank in the hierarchy. See the information in Cevat Hakkı Tarım, *Tarihte Kırşehir-Gülşehir ve Babailer-Ahiler- Bektasiler* (Istanbul: Yeniçağ Matbaası, 1948), 67.

²⁶⁸ *MI*, 233.

²⁶⁹ For more information see Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, 213-6; Gölpınarlı, “İslam ve Türk İllerinde Fütüvvet ve Teşkilatı,” 46-54.

circle around Pir Ali closely.²⁷⁰ Akhi affiliations of the order are also detectable in 'Askeri's designation of Akhi Muhammad Khalwati (d. 780/1378-9), as the exemplary figure for their way.²⁷¹

Also involved in the circle were the *abdāls*, some of whom are mentioned by name by 'Askeri. Although he notes that Pir Ali advised to keep distant from this kind of dervishes,²⁷² the fact that Ismail Maşuki was entrusted to an *abdāl* for his learning shows how significant their role in the order could be.

As noted before 'Askeri is completely silent about messianic claims ascribed to Pir Ali. *Semerat*'s account regarding Pir Ali, however, revolves around this issue. He narrates that Pir Ali was accused of messianic claims and was interrogated by the court for this reason. Thanks to his supernatural abilities, however, Pir Ali was able to inflict punishment on those who generated these unfounded claims and was let go without any sentence.²⁷³ According to the same account, however, Suleyman I further questioned him during the expedition towards Iran (ca. 940/1533). In this episode narrated by Sarı Abdullah, the Sultan asked Pir Ali regarding his claim to be the Mahdi and contain the four rivers of the paradise within himself.²⁷⁴ Pir Ali responded by denying making any messianic claims and confirmed Suleyman's messiahship as the ruler of the age. He also explained that the four rivers were uttered just an indication of abundance of clear water,

²⁷⁰ *MI*, 218 and 225.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, 104 and 181. Muhammad Khalwati was from Khorezm, and was a disciple of Zahid Gilani. He had significant impact on his nephew, 'Umar Khalwati (d. 800/ 1387), who is regarded as the founder of the Khalwatiyya. See "Halvetiyye" *TDVİA* (Süleyman Uludağ). Also see Gölpınarlı, "Fütüvvet Teşkilatı," 81-2, for a discussion of Akhi figures within the beginnings of Khalwatiyya.

²⁷² *MI*, 103. Here Askeri discusses Pir Ali's attitude towards *majdhūbs* and *budalā* 'who seem to have been found around the hospice in Aksaray. Askeri reports that Pir Ali advised not to be too close or too far away from the *budalā*'. According to the author, by being close, Pir Ali meant taking them as models, following, and imitating these men, and by being far away, he meant harboring hatred towards them.

²⁷³ *Semerat*, 246.

²⁷⁴ Q 47:15. The verse describes four kinds of rivers that are to be found in paradise: rivers of unpolluted water, milk, honey, and wine.

milk and honey around the hospice. When Suleyman asked him regarding the abundance of wine as described in the verse, Pir Ali explained that it pointed out to the abundance of ecstasy (*cezbe*) in the hospice and illustrated his point by sending the vizier at hand unconscious by a single look (*nazar*). Convinced of his innocence and spiritual power, the sultan expressed his apologies and asked for his son Ismail to be sent to Istanbul. This part of the story, however, will be explored in the next section relying on the writings of Askeri rather than Sarı Abdullah.

Although the dependability of this narrative is quite doubtful and Sulayman's visit to the hospice is impossible to be confirmed by other sources, Sarı Abdullah seems to be revealing some of the basic perceptions regarding Pir Ali and the way he was understood by the circle around him. It is likely that symbolical approaches to heaven were found in the Bayrami-Malāmi milieu and Pir Ali was regarded as the chosen person who could provide the taste of heaven through immense ecstasy.

The main threat for the Ottoman authority, on the other hand, might have arisen from Pir Ali's effort to disseminate his teachings by sending representatives all over Anatolia. It is possible that the Ottoman governmental agencies followed his activities closely and his son Ismail's arrival to the imperial city was not gone unnoticed. Therefore the abrupt execution of the latter seems to have been a reaction towards Pir Ali as much as his young son.

Pir Ali is reported to have died a few months before his son's execution. According to 'Askeri, he died at his adherent Dedemzade's house in Kayseri. In the same month, his body was brought to Aksaray and buried there in the courtyard attached to his

house.²⁷⁵ There has been speculation that Pir Ali might have been executed as well since the inscription on the gate of his tomb includes the designation *al-shahīd* (the martyr); however it is not possible to confirm this in the sources.²⁷⁶

The Case of Ismail Maşuki

“We stand watching the boundless sea, there
thrown

The martyr of *enel-hak* died at Atmeydani”²⁷⁷

The fate of the Order took an interesting turn as Pir Ali Aksarayı’s son, referred to as Ismail Maşuki in most classical Ottoman sources, was executed in Istanbul during the year 945/1539.²⁷⁸ Although several sources describe the circumstances of this execution in considerable detail, they do not always coincide well with each other.

Askeri, being the oldest and most detailed among the sources, puts forth a distinct vision regarding Ismail Maşuki. Although being a devoted disciple of Pir Ali, Askeri did not favor the latter’s son much and his notes on Ismail are downright disparaging and unforgiving. The first introductory note we find on Ismail in *Mir’at* belongs to the time of

²⁷⁵ *MI*, 200.

²⁷⁶ See the discussion in *MM*, 45.

²⁷⁷ “Seyrindeyiz atıldığı sahil-siz denizin, /Atmeydanında ölmüş enel-hak şehidinin.”

Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, “Māverāda Söyleniş,” in *Kendi Gök Kubbemiz*, 69.

²⁷⁸ Various titles used for Ismail include *al-Ma’shūki*, *Oghlan Shaykh* (“the Boyish Shaykh”, indicating his young age); and *Çelebi Shaykh*. Askeri, on the other hand, calls him Dervish Kemal. More information on him can be found in “İsmāil Ma’shūki” *TDVİA* (author unknown); ‘Atāyi, 88-9; *Semerat*, 248-51; Lalizade, 27-30, 39-40; Mustakimzade, 11a-12a; Vassaf, *Sefine*, II, 281-2; *MM*, 48-54; *ZM*, 274-90; idem, “Kanuni Sultan Suleyman Devrinde Osmanlı Resmi Düşüncesine Karşı Bir Tepki Hareketi: Oğlan Şeyh Ismail-i Maşuki,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 10 (1990): 49-58; Öngören, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf*, 286-98.

Askeri's first stay in Aksaray in 1534. In this episode, 'Askeri remembers Pir Ali talking about the disagreements that might emerge between Sufi fathers, their sons, and the dervishes. When Pir Ali remarks that sometimes conflicts happen and dervishes fall into disagreements with *pīrs'* sons, Askeri remembers looking around to see the son with whom he feels they are destined to have conflict. Unable to find the son, Askeri learns that the latter is in Kayseri and busy with his studies.²⁷⁹

When Askeri and his companions returned to Istanbul from their first visit to Aksaray, an elder (Dedemzade Haji Hayreddin) was dispatched to lead the circle in Istanbul. Askeri mentions that the first seeds of the dissention (*fitna*) were planted by this persona.²⁸⁰ Although he does not clarify what he means by this, it seems that one of the main activities of Dedemzāde in Istanbul was proselytizing the prominence of Ismail Maşuki.²⁸¹ His propagation seems to have yielded results, because some adherents in Istanbul traveled to Aksaray and asked Pir Ali to send his son to Istanbul with them around a year later (941/1535).²⁸²

According to Askeri, when this demand from Istanbul emerged, Pir Ali tried to reject it by mentioning that Ismail was only a young boy and was not qualified to guide people. The group, however, was so persistent that Pir Ali had no other option but to send them to Kayseri and see if Mehmed Abdal, to whom Ismail was entrusted, would be willing to send him to Istanbul. When they were in Kayseri, Mehmed Abdal refused to serve them proper food and did not pay them proper respect. According to Askeri, this

²⁷⁹ *MI*, 209.

²⁸⁰ *MI*, 213.

²⁸¹ Dedemzade was from Kayseri, the city where Ismail was sent to be educated. There is a good chance that Dedemzade was quite close to the family and Pir Ali asked him to look after his son in Kayseri although Askeri comments that Ismail was entrusted to Abdal Mehmed. The close relationship between Dedemzade and Pir Ali is also indicated by the fact that Pir Ali died in his house later on.

²⁸² *MI*, 215.

was his way of indicating to the group that their wish was not endorsed. They, however, did not pay attention to this sign and brought Ismail back to Aksaray. When Pir Ali learned about the situation, he remarked that they would get into trouble for not abiding by Mehmed Abdal's wishes. He again tried to dissuade them from taking Ismail to Istanbul. Upon their insistence, however, he had to refer to Akhi Baba (who was also from Kayseri) to make the decision regarding the situation. Upon this, unreluctantly Akhi Baba granted the necessary authorization and blessed Ismail by taking off the cloak (*ridā*) around his neck and putting it on him.²⁸³

Again at this point, Askeri insists that Pir Ali was sending his son to Istanbul for education purposes only and advised him to be obedient to the dervishes, particularly to Ahmed Edirnevi. Ismail, however, he remarks, did not pay attention to his father's advice and started to harbor hatred towards Ahmed Edirnevi.

The hatred was mutual it seems. Askeri's hostility towards the group from Istanbul is so apparent that he calls them *munāfiqūn*, hypocrites who cover their unbelief under the disguise of devotion. His comments concerning Ismail are even more reproachful.

Pir Ali was cognizant of his son's dispositions and was aware of the extent of his shortcomings. He (Ismail) lacked competence in his nature and had no natural charm in his persona. He could not read a letter right or recite poetry metrically. He had a dishonest nature, and was hot-tempered, unruly (*serkesh*), foolish (*divāne-meşreb*), ignoble, vile, idle and vagabond-like. He was naturally opposed to the untainted morals of Pir Ali. It was hard on the hearts of knowers (*‘ārifūn*) that Pir Ali had such a son. In this regard, Pir Ali would refer to this verse: "You bring the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living. You give sustenance to whom You please without measure. (Q 3:27)"²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Ibid, 216-8.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 217.

‘Askeri’s insight regarding Pir Ali’s opinion of his son is rather puzzling. Although ‘Askeri insists that he was deeply disappointed by his son and did not deem him to be his successor, Pir Ali continued to let his son act in accordance with the wishes of the audience in Istanbul. It is apparent, from the unenthusiastic remarks of ‘Askeri, that Ismail was authorized by the elders of the order before he arrived at Istanbul. Thus, it is not entirely convincing that Ismail acted on his own will against the wishes of his father.

On their way back to Istanbul, the group who accompanied Ismail learned that all their shops were destroyed in a fire. For ‘Askeri, this was a result of their offense against Mehmed Abdal. He gladly notes that the latter’s curse on these shop-owners continued, and as soon as they rebuilt their shops in a few months, they lost everything again in another fire.²⁸⁵ Despite these omens, says ‘Askeri, Shaykh Ismail started to disseminate his teachings (*irshād*). Ahmed Edirnevi, on the other hand, designated as an ascetic (*zāhid*), pure, and pious (*muttaqī*) man by ‘Askeri, became uncomfortable with Ismail’s teachings and the crowds he attracted.²⁸⁶ He tried to warn Ismail in accordance with Pir Ali’s admonishments but it was no use. The hostility between Ahmed Edirnevi and Ismail seems to have reached the point that Askeri seems hints at possible plans of assassination against Ahmed Edirnevi. He refers to the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) who was almost murdered by his brothers for the sake of their fathers’ undivided attention (Q 12:9). Although these plans were not carried out, says ‘Askeri, there were defamations against Ahmed Edirnevi springing from the group around Ismail.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, 218-9.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, 220-1. Ahmed Edirnevi’s careful religious attitude is reflected in a letter addressed to one of his disciples. (Mustakimzade, 14a-b). It is quite doubtful, however, that the letter really belonged to him, since Mustakimzade is quite a late source and the letter seems to be largely copied from a text attributed to the Naqshbandi shaykh Abd al-Khalik Gujduvani, found in Ali b. Huseyin al-Safi’s *Rashahat-i ‘Ayn al-Hayat*; in Ottoman Turkish published in Istanbul: Tabhane-i Amire, H.1279 (1862), 24-5.

Finally, it seems that after a face-off between two parties, Ahmed Edirnevi left Istanbul for Edirne on foot for good. 'Askeri and another dervish accompanied him in his travel and re-location. In making sense of this relocation, 'Askeri refers to prophet Yusuf's journey from Jerusalem to Egypt where he was treated much better and his value was appreciated.²⁸⁷ Because of this feud, Askeri seems to have been elated by Ismail's execution: "Whatever he attributed to Ahmed Edirnevi was attributed to him and what evil plans he devised for him was carried out on him."²⁸⁸

Before the events reached to this point, however, Pir Ali seems to have tried to patch up the antagonistic relationship between Ismail and Ahmed Edirnevi. Both of them were summoned to Aksaray around the year 1536, seemingly to talk over the issues that had caused them to grow apart. This is, at least, one way of making sense of Askeri's account, since his explanations regarding the intentions of Pir Ali are quite hard to follow.

According to 'Askeri, Pir Ali called his son back to Aksaray persistently once his disobedience to Ahmed Edirnevi was noticed. After constant calling, Ismail returned to Aksaray and stayed with his father for about eight months. Once again, Ismail's admirers from Istanbul traveled to the hospice and asked Pir Ali to send his son back to Istanbul with them. Pir Ali refused and wanted to entrust Ismail to Ahmed Edirnevi one more time. Ahmed Edirnevi was called to Aksaray on an urgent note, which caused great anxiety in the circle in Edirne. Ahmed Edirnevi set out for Aksaray promptly and passed through Istanbul on his way. At his point, notes Askeri, only four or five dervishes were loyal to Edirnevi in Istanbul and the rest had sworn allegiance to Ismail. Being able to

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 222-3. Ahmed Edirnevi lived in Edirne until the end of his life and when Askeri wrote this treatise in 957, he must have been still alive.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 223.

gather only ten dervishes, among whom was the author 'Askeri, Edirnevi continued on his journey towards Aksaray.²⁸⁹ A

Askeri also explains that when they reached Aksaray, Pir Ali was pleased to see Edirnevi and welcomed him properly. Upon the insistence of his wife (Ismail's mother who supported her son against Edirnevi), however, Pir Ali felt compelled to put Edirnevi in front of the court.²⁹⁰ In a few days, finding a fault in Ahmed Edirnevi, Pir Ali brought him to the court in the hospice. Once the circle gathered in expectation of a trial and punishment, Pir Ali, with a look of awe caused both Ismail and his mother to lose their consciousness, and performed the rite of authorization upon Ahmed rather than punishing him as the others expected. This ceremony, which has been recorded in the previous section, seems to have been witnessed only by Ahmed Edirnevi's adherents, as all the other figures (Ismail, his mother, Nebi Sufi, Edhem Dede) were in a state of unconsciousness according to 'Askeri. Pir Ali's son-in-law, Yakub Helvai (d. 996/1588),²⁹¹ was also there according to Askeri, and thought this was a weird hoax because he was under the influence of Satan.²⁹²

Askeri's repetitive notes regarding Ismail and his mother being unconscious during the ceremony are quite troubling. One would expect that Pir Ali, if he was really

²⁸⁹ These ten people are referred to as '*ashara-i mubashshara*, the celebrated ten who were the earliest supporters of the prophet and were miraculously promised special treatment in the hereafter. Ibid, 224-5.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 228. The text uses the term *peymanceye koymak*. I have translated it as "putting in front of the court" because the term "*peymanceye durmak*" was used in Bektashi and Mevlevi circles for the dervish asking for forgiveness from the shaykh. See the explanation in Gölpınarlı, *Vilayet-name*, 137.

²⁹¹ Yakub Helvai was born in Silifke and belonged to a family of sweet-makers for the palace. He adhered to Pir Ali Aksarayi and became his son-in-law. (See 'Atayi, 65 and 70) According to Vassaf, he came to Istanbul together with Ismail and was prisoned after the latter's execution. It was after the war in Iran that he was let go free. Asking for his blessing, Sulayman let him have a *dergah* close to Bozdoğan Kemeri. (*Sefîne-i Evliya* II, 482). Pir Ali resided over the tekke between 1548-55 and came to be known as a Bayrami Shaykh who held vocal *dhikr* ceremonies. Mustakimzade notes that he was largely admired based on an account found in *Lemezât-i hulviyye*. Ekrem Isin considers this tekke to be extremely important for Malâmi activity in Istanbul. "Helvai Tekkesi" *DBIA* (Ekrem Işın); "Melamilik" *DBIA* (Ekrem Işın).

²⁹² *MI*, 234.

supporting Edirnevi, would choose to let everybody watch and observe who the real successor is. It is another signal that it was Ismail rather than Edirnevi who was supported by Pir Ali. Quite possibly, Edirnevi was summoned to Aksaray due to the complaint of Ismail who was disappointed that Edirnevi had not pledge allegiance to him. This might have been the reason why there was anxiety in Edirne when they received the urgent note. It seems that Edirnevi was chastised according to the rules of the order and was sent back to Istanbul together with Ismail. These admonitions, however, did not seem to have worked since Edirnevi and his adherents parted ways with Ismail halfway to Istanbul and continued their own journeys.

Regarding this second trip to Istanbul, 'Askeri remarks that Pir Ali told his son not to start teaching in Istanbul but rather to continue his education. He also asserts that Ismail was urged to ask for permission from the vizier before starting to preach in Istanbul. These indications, however, are hardly convincing. It is more likely that Ismail arrived in Istanbul during this particular time frame, which was around the time of Sultan Sulayman commencing a military expedition against Corfu (1537).²⁹³ In the absence of the ruler, Ismail started to preach freely. This expedition would keep the Sultan away from Istanbul for five months, enough time for Ismail to re-establish himself in Istanbul and further enlarge his circle. The relationship between Edirnevi and Ismail seems to have been completely severed at this point, since Askeri does not record anything regarding this time period in Istanbul.

Sarı Abdullah' s narrative regarding this time frame, on the other hand, is based on the authority of Ahmed Edirnevi whom he claims to have met as a young boy when

²⁹³ Ibid, 237.

the latter was an old man.²⁹⁴ His report from Edirnevi does not fit well with that of 'Askeri's. There is no recollection of the animosity between Ismail and Edirnevi, and the execution is understood in quite different terms. This is how the *Semerat* describes the incident from the mouth of Ahmed Edirnevi:

We were sent to Istanbul accompanying the *Çelebi* (Ismail). After six months passed, Pir Ali Sultan passed away. Later, Celebi Shaykh arrived at Edirne and spent some time there. He was a young man of nineteen years old and had just started to grow a beard. Someone from the 'ulama', being an admirer of Pir Ali, hosted a couple of banquets to honor Çelebi Shaykh and seated him in the front seat before the notables and even himself. This angered many who started to search for the shaykh's faults. When he returned from Edirne to Istanbul, multitudes of people came to visit him. As crowds gathered around him and some accusations rose against the shaykh, the late Sultan Suleyman heard about the situation. He sent a message to the Çelebi Shaykh informing him of the ill-intentioned people and urged him to return to his hometown. Some elder dervishes from the circle around Pir Ali also advised him to change his location ... However, the late Çelebi Shaykh (refused) by saying: "The end of our journey has been clarified for us. We have surrendered to our destiny and our body will be drowned in blood in the end."²⁹⁵

Here the process that led to Ismail's execution is described as having been caused by various opponents who could not stand the attention he received in Istanbul. This type of explanation clears the sultan from the responsibility of executing a popular holy man, and at the same time, exonerates Ismail from accusations of heresy. Thus it works well with the overall aim of *Semerat* in providing a sympathetic approach to the executions.

Another source on the incident is 'Atayi's *Zeyl*. Partly relying on the *Semerat*, he provides the story of the shaykh common to those who heard of it a century after the execution. After noting that Ismail was the son of Pir Ali and was named by Bunyamin

²⁹⁴ Sarı Abdullah was born in 992/1584 and Edirnevi, according to 'Atayi, died around the year 1000/1591-1. Thus Sarı Abdullah could be eight years old at most when he met Edirnevi.

²⁹⁵ *Semerat*, 249-50.

Ayaşı, ‘Atayi’s bibliographic account fluctuates between various images of the shaykh and makes these points regarding his activities in Istanbul:

He came to the city of governorship, Istanbul, and started to spread religious instructions (*ma’ārif ve ‘ulūm*). He was a possessor of immense ecstasy (*jazba-i azīma*). For most days, he would be preaching at mosques, transmitting *tafsīr* and forming sermon assemblies. Many from among soldiers (Askeri) joined his circle of allegiance (*bi’āt*) and submitted their wills to him. He became famous with *shathiyyāt* in the hubbub of the public and for a year, everybody was able to benefit from his generosity and his fame grew considerably. In the year 935 (ca. 1528), his *fitna* was terminated and his deeds were referred to the sword of shari‘a by the fatwa of the mufti of the time Kemal-pashazade Efendi. It has been told that before his execution, (Ismail) went to the *mudarris* Çivizade Efendi to complain about the crowd around him and asked to be interrogated and executed. He was beheaded in front of the fountain in Atmeydani together with his twelve disciples.²⁹⁶ Some men from the neighborhood have built a small mosque over the fence; it is known as the *Parmakli Mescid* and still stands today.²⁹⁷ It has been told that by naming him Ismail when he was born, Bünyamin Ayaşı was hinting at his being sacrificed for the path of love (*qurbān-i rāh-i muhabbat*).²⁹⁸ In the same sense, when Ismail decided to visit Istanbul, his father confirmed this insinuation and clearly stated that Ismail would become a martyr. His father is reported to have said: “The lion will not let its cub to be eaten; I will protect him as long as I live.” Indeed, it was a few months after his father’s passing away that Ismail became inflicted with the charges leading to his execution.

‘Atayi’s tone in this account is so subtle and restrained that it seems to indicate the popularity of Ismail even after a century of his execution. This favorable account might also relate to ‘Atayi’s close relationship with the Bayrami-Malāmi circles as the Order had established itself within the educated class of Istanbul by the seventeenth century.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Atmeydani is the ancient Hippodrome in Istanbul. Today it is located at the back of the Blue Mosque. The specific area where Ismail was beheaded is encircled by iron rods and can be seen attached to the museum (Istanbul Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi) across the Hippodrome.

²⁹⁷ The mosque that Gölpinarlı remembers as *Üçler Mescidi* does not exist today. According to Gölpinarlı, the mosque was built in the year 959/1551 and was burned down later. (*MM*, 48-9)

²⁹⁸ This naming is taken to be a miraculous sign that Maşuki would be sacrificed in the way of God just like Ismail, son of Ibrahim, the prophet.

²⁹⁹ Gölpinarlı believes that Mecdi and ‘Atayi were both Hamzavis. (Gölpinarlı, *Seyh Bedreddin*, 71-2; more information can be found on this issue in the fourth chapter). For an evaluation of ‘Atayi’s handling of the

Sarı Abdullah and ‘Atayi both record the date of the incident as 935/1529, which was accepted to be true for quite some time. The date, however, has been corrected to 945/1539 in the light of some substantial evidence.³⁰⁰ This inaccuracy with regards to the date, however, caused other errors in the account of ‘Atayi. His report regarding Ismail’s execution to have taken place in accordance with the fatwa of Kemal Pashazade (d. 940/1534)³⁰¹ needs to be questioned. The latter was already dead at the time, therefore it could not be this much respected *shaykh al-islām* who finalized the decision on the heresy of Ismail Maşuki. The *shaykh al-islām* of the time was Çivizade Muhyiddin (d. 954/1547) who was specifically known for his hostile attitude towards Sufism.³⁰² Judging by the dates, it seems that the case was brought up by Çivizade right after his appointment.

cases of heresy with regards to Sufis, see: Asli Niyazioğlu, “Ottoman Sufi Sheikhs Between This World and the Hereafter: A Study of Nev’izāde ‘Atā’ī’s (1583-1635) Bibliographical Dictionary” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2003), 158-170. The author’s conclusion that ‘Atayi legitimized the interrogated, but accused the executed, does not fit well with his account concerning Shaykh Ismail.

³⁰⁰ The most important of these is the court registry documentation of the case, which notes the date as 20 Dhu’l-Hijja 945/ 9 May 1539. (See the evaluation in *ZM*, 283). This date is also confirmed by Askeri who notes Pir Ali’s death to have occurred in the month of Sha’ban in 945. As sources are in agreement with regards to Ismail’s execution to have taken place just a few months after his father’s death, the month of *Dhu’l-Hijja* in the year 945 fits in perfectly with the timeline. For an elaboration, see Erünsal, XLIX-LI. Also see hand-written corrections on *MM*, 45 and 49; further elaborations can be found in Gölpinarlı, *100 Soruda Türkiye’de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar*, 264.

³⁰¹ “Kemal Pasha-zāde, or Ibn(-i) Kemal, usual appellations of Shams al-Din Ahmad b. Sulayman b. Kamal Pasha” *El*² (V. L. Menage); also in Richard Cooper Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Hierarchy* (N.J.: Ithaca Press, 1986), 224-39.

³⁰² On the family of Çivi-zade see, “Çivi-zāde”, *El*² (V. L. Menage). Çivi-zade was the *Shaykh al-Islam* for a comparatively short period between the years 945/1539 and 948/1541. Sulayman I dismissed him from the office due to his “excessive orthodoxy” (the first *shaykh al-islām* not to hold the office for life). (See Repp, 252-3) In one of his fatwas, he claimed that if readers of *Fusus al-Hikam* by Ibn ‘Arabi understood its meaning, believed in it, and considered it to be true, they became heretics (*zindiq*) and were to be executed, even if they repented. His excessive dislike towards Ibn ‘Arabi seems to have agitated even the Sultan Sulayman who asked for a resolution from Ebussu‘ud Efendi. The latter found a solution by admitting the greatness of Ibn ‘Arabi, but claiming that the troublesome parts of the *Fusus* was forged by a Jew in order to lead Muslims astray. A general discussion of the issue is carried out in Şükrü Özen, “Ottoman ‘Ulamā’ Debating Sufism: Settling the Conflict on the Ibn al-‘Arabi’s Legacy by Fatwas,” in *El Sufismo y las normas del Islam, Papers Presented at the IV International Conference on Islamic Legal Studies: Law and Sufism* (Murcia, 7-10 May, 2003), edited by Alfonso Carmona, Murcia: 2006.

Among other names that were involved in the case was Ebussu‘ud Efendi (d. 982/1574) who was the *mufti* of *Rumeli kazaskerlik* at the time.³⁰³ This accomplished man of learning would become the *shaykh al-islām* a few years later and serve in this position for thirty years. During this time, he continued to voice opinions against the Oghlan Shakyh’s followers.³⁰⁴ Deciding on the fatwa for the execution, however, seems to have taken a toll on him at the time. Ebussu‘ud later remembered the case in these terms:

In the matter of Oghlan Shaykh’s execution I hesitated and deliberated beyond the customary limit. After the late Molla Seyhi Çelebi³⁰⁵ had given judgment on his unbelief, I delayed mine for two or three further meetings; and (my) judgment was not given until no possibility of ambiguity remained and as long as there was any chance (of his innocence).^{306 307}

³⁰³ On Ebussu‘ūd see: “Abu’l-Su‘ūd Muḥammad b. Muḥyi’l-Din Muhammad b. al-‘Imād Muṣṭafa al-‘Imādi” EI² (J. Shacht); also see Repp, 272-96.

³⁰⁴ An example of his fatwa regarding Oghlan Shaykh’s admirers many years after the latter’s execution was preserved: “Question: ‘What ought to be done to Zeyd, who says that the person whom they call Oghlan Shaykh (executed some time ago) was wrongfully killed?’ Answer: ‘If Zeyd is of Oghlan Shaykh’s persuasion, he should be killed.’ (Repp, 238; translated from Düzdağ, no. 978.) Furthermore, he was also the one who approved execution of Hamza Bali in 980/1573. Despite the clear-cut feeling of animosity in his *fetwas* against the order, he did let another important figure of Bayrami-Malāmiyya, Gazanfer Dede (d. 974/1561), go free under the consideration that there was not enough material from which to deduce his unbelief. (‘Atāyi, 87-8). One should note that Ebussu‘ud must have been knowledgeable about Bayramiyya, since his father Yavsi-zade was a Bayrami shaykh and had written a commentary on Bedreddin’s *Waridat*.

³⁰⁵ Molla Seyhi Celebi (d. 951/1544-5) was a *mudarris* at the time, most probably at the madrasa of Eyyub el-Ensari in Istanbul. (Mecdi, 489)

³⁰⁶ Repp, 237; translated from ‘Atāyi, 88. As difficult as it might have been, Ebussu‘ud approved executions of various other Sufis during the course of Sulayman’s rule. Shaykh Muhyiddin Karamani (ex. 957/ 1550) of the Gulsheni-Halvetiyye was also executed accordance with the fatwa of Ebussu‘ud. (Accusations against him are very similar to the ones against Ismail Maşuki, see the court documents in *ZM*, 357-60). Also see these studies regarding the Ottoman reaction against the ‘heresy’ during the sixteenth century include: Colin Imber, “The Persecution of the Ottoman Shiites According to the Muhimme Defterleri, 1565-85” *Der Islam* 56 (1979): 245-73; Ahmet Refik, “Onaltinci Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektasilik (1558-91),” *Darülfünun Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 9, no. 2 (1932), 21-59. Formation of the Bektashiyye has generally been understood as a consequence of these pressures. See A.T. Karamustafa, “Kalenders, Abdals, Hayderis: The formation of the Bektasiye in the Sixteenth Century” in *Süleymān The Second and His Time*, ed. Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993), 121-9; Suraiya Faroghi, “Conflict, Accommodation and Long-Term Survival. The Bektashi Order and The Ottoman State (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)” in *Bektachiyya: Études sur l’ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach*, ed. Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (Istanbul : Les Éditions Isis, 1995), 171-84.

Among the accusations recorded in Ismail Maşuki's court documents, several points emerge.³⁰⁸ Witnesses report that they heard Ismail say, "Every person is God, and God is visible through every being," and that "one needs to worship the visible God."³⁰⁹ Following this, his disregard for the hereafter is underlined.³¹⁰ One of the witnesses indicates that Ismail saw someone performing daily prayer and said to him: "Are you praying so that you can see heaven? The thing that you call heaven, we do not even put our horses in it." In the same document, Ismail is also noted to have said that after leaving the body, the soul travels to another one. Another witness indicates that Ismail denied the suffering of the grave and the interrogation in the hereafter. In relation to this, Ismail is also reported to have indicated that the rituals of Islam, daily prayers and fasting, were meant as punishment for the human kind and are no longer applicable.³¹¹

Perhaps beneath these ideas was his messianic claim, which is also noted in the court documents. According to this, Ismail said that his father was the *qutb* and that he was the Mahdi, and accused those who did not believe in them of not possessing proper

³⁰⁸ For the court case documents regarding Ismail Maşuki, see *ZM*, 354-7.

³⁰⁹ There is a good chance that this relates to the saying attributed to Ali. Askeri notes it in *Mir'at*: "*Ol sırr-ı merdân kim Ali'dir / Serçeşme-i cümle velidir / Cihanda görmediğim Tanrı'ya ben / İbadet etmezem dedi rûşen.*" - "The secret of all real men is 'Ali/ He is the head of all of the *wali*/ God that I do not see in the universe/ Is not the one I worship said that brightened one." (*MI*, 62).

³¹⁰ Accusations regarding the denial of the hereafter seem to have occurred in the cases of Sufi 'Ayn al-Qudât Hamadâni (ex.1131). Arberry in his study of Ayn al-Qudat's *Tamhîdât* indicates that this understanding of the hereafter was due to the influence of philosophical writings. (A.J. Arberry, *A Sufi Martyr: The Apologia of 'Ain al-Qudat al-Hamadhani* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1969), 15. Symbolical approaches to the hereafter have been indicated regarding Shaykh Bedreddin and Hurufîs as well. Therefore Malâmîs are definitely not alone in this regard, and quite possibly followed similar belief systems. Some Hurufîs rejected the material resurrection, hell and heaven of the orthodox Islam, and believed in the re-manifestation of the same essence in new forms. See further discussion in Browne, "Some Notes," 71-2. There were descriptions of those who have not reached the real faith appearing in animal forms in their other lives. See further discussion in Usluer, 173. For some insight into the Bayramî-Malâmî discussion of the eschatology see the fifth chapter.

³¹¹ A similar accusation is also recorded in Askeri: "*Acîb derde giriftar idi kavmi, / Salâti terk eder, sevmezdi savmi.*" (His followers suffered from a weird infliction / They did not perform the prayers and did not like to fast.) *MI*, 208.

faith.³¹² It is quite possible that Ismail pursued the idea that the time had come for revealing such hidden truths, and that he was the chosen one to lead people to a new era. Although there is no clear mention of it, some kind of astrological calculation might have been involved in the process.³¹³ This might have been the reason for Ismail Maşuki's blatant behavior in Istanbul and his ignoring of all warnings to leave the city.

Ismail, however, seems to have stayed in the popular mind as an ecstatic Sufi who was wrongfully executed by Süleyman I. 'Atayî's account reflects the partition among the people with regard to the case and concludes his account with a description of his miracle occurring after his death.

The people are split into two groups with regard to him. Some people feel that he was in deviation and heresy (*ilhād ve zindika*) and are pleased that he was executed together with his admirers. On the other hand, some believe that he was a man of clear miracles and high spiritual degrees, and they have interpreted (*ta'wil*) his statements as much as possible. (God knows best).

His body is buried in the area known as Kayalar close to the new fortress.³¹⁴ It has been heard that when he was beheaded, his remains were thrown into the sea. His body emerged in this area of Kayalar and his kinsfolk wanted to bury it. Ismail, however, advised them not to separate his head from his body, which caused puzzlement and curiosity. At this moment, his head also landed at the seashore just like his body. Thus they were able to carry out his advice and bury him.³¹⁵

³¹² ZM, 355.

³¹³ That messianic expectations found their way into the mainstream Khalwati and Bayrami circles is apparent by the composition of several treatises on the issue during the sixteenth century. Mevlana 'Isa composed in the year 1543 (four years after Ismail's execution) *Jamî' al-Maknûnat* which expected the raising of the Mahdi soon. The author was from a madrasa background and had affiliations with the Sufi orders and the court. Reminiscent of the perfect culmination of Sufi and Shi'ite sentiments, he described the Mahdi to be preceded by thirty perfect human beings, several of whom were previous Khalwati shaykhs. The Sultan of the time, Süleyman, might be this Mahdi he suggested, but quite likely he was rather a chief server and the harbinger of the Mahdi. Another indication of apocalyptic tendencies within the Bayrami circles is *Rumuz-u Kunuz* of Bayrami Shaykh Ibn 'Isa Akhisari (d. 967/1559-60) whose work brought together history, sufism, and '*ilm-i jafr*. (For further discussion see Barbara Flemming, "Public Opinion Under Sultan Süleyman," in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, 49-57.)

³¹⁴ He is referring to Rumeli Hisarı, the fortress built by Mehmed II during the siege of Istanbul. Ismail Maşuki's grave still exists today and is attached to the Kayalar mosque.

³¹⁵ 'Atayî, 89.

In a similar vein, Evliya Çelebi (d.1682) indicates the innocence of the shaykh by adding more drama to the scene. According to this, a few days after the execution, Süleyman I saw İsmail and his twelve adherents that were killed with him, whirling in the Marmara Sea and murmuring, “*Sultanim*, they killed us wrongfully; we came to state our situation.” This whirling continued for an hour, leaving the Sultan in tears. Then, the sea carried them towards the area where their bodies were found and buried later.³¹⁶

İsmail’s execution and his lasting memory as the wrongfully sacrificed Sufi shaykh exhibit the multidimensional character of his teachings. İsmail’s fate seems to have continued to fascinate popular imagery until recent times, while Bayrami-Malāmîs tried to find new ways of transmitting their teachings in unfavorable circumstances. The order by no means ceased to allure new adherents after the execution. It rather continued to flourish by adopting their teachings to new audiences.

Dealing With the Trauma: Ahmed Sarban and Husameddin Ankaravi

The execution of İsmail Maşuki thoroughly changed the way the Order operated and presented itself to the public. The stern reaction from the political and religious authorities urged them to reconsider and rearrange their position vis-a-vis the political authority. In the subsequent decades, Bayrami-Malāmî *pīrs* carefully stayed away from İstanbul and mostly operated from the small towns in which they were born.

³¹⁶ See ZM, 284 footnote; from *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi* I, İstanbul: 1314 (1896), 465.

After Ismail Maşuki, Bayrami-Malāmis adhered to Ahmed Sarban, the Cameleer (d. 952/1545),³¹⁷ who was from Hayrabolu, a district of Tekirdag in the eastern Thrace. Sarı Abdullah and ‘Atayi provide very similar information on Ahmed Sarban. They report that Ahmed worked as the head of the cameleers for the army during the realm of Suleyman I and met with Pir Ali Aksarayi when the army was on its way to Iraq (940/1534).³¹⁸ He was quickly gripped by the charisma of the shaykh, left his occupation after returning from the war, and devoted himself to advancing in the path. Later he returned to his hometown where he taught in accordance with his Bayrami authorization from Pir Ali until the end of his life. ‘Atayi, in his account, keeps his tone quite respectful to the shaykh, but carefully notes that his path of divine oneness was inflicted with charges of heresy.

Ahmed Sarban was an accomplished poet. Gölpınarlı in his assessment of his literary heritage considers him one of the best poets nurtured by the Bayrami-Malāmi tradition. He thinks that Ahmed exhibited profound knowledge of classical Ottoman poetry and was able to express himself in simple yet eloquent Turkish.³¹⁹ His poetry typically pronounces the majesty of the awliyā’, and praises the family of the prophet.³²⁰ One of his *ghazals* begins with a heartfelt eulogy to Pir Ali Aksarayi and then to the paragon of Muhammad and ‘Ali, and continues with reminiscing the twelve imams: “Pir

³¹⁷ “Sārbān Ahmed” *TDVIA* (Nihat Azamat); *MM*, 54-70, 340-51; *ZM*, 307; ‘Atayi, 65, 70; *Semerat*, 252-6, Lalizade, 30 and 33; Mustakimzade, 14b-30b (includes his letters and poems); Vassaf, *Sefine* II, 474-8.

³¹⁸ ‘Atāyi, 70; *Semerat*, 252.

³¹⁹ *MM*, 56. According to *Semerat*, Ahmed Sarban used the eiphets “Kaygusuz” and “Ahmedi” in his poetry. *Semerat* also records one of his poems, a popular one among Malāmis. “*Vārımı ol dosta verdim hānumānim kalmadi/ Cümlesinden el yudum pes du cihānim kalmadi*.- All I had, I have devoted to the Beloved, nothing is left. / I renounced them all, nothing from this world for me or the next.” In the *SohbetnameSohbetname*, Ibrahim Efendi reports memorizing these lines with his grandfather (*SohbetnameSohbetname*, 39b) On the other hand, there has been a long discussion on the ownership of certain poetry by Ahmed Sarban. See the discussion in “Sārbān Ahmed” *TDVIA* (Nihat Azamat).

³²⁰ See the discussion on Shi‘i tendencies within Ahmed Sarban’s poetry in *MM*, 59-65.

Ali Sultan is our *pīr* / Muhammad ‘Ali is our secret / Light of God is our light / We are the people of secrets and illumination.”³²¹

The following poem praising the *awliyā*’, on the other hand, became a favorite in various Sufi circles:

Do not look awry at the saint; the universe is in his hand.
He is the one who governs the world; the authority of sovereign is in his hand.

The Divine Reality sent him to give right guidance to his servants here;
He guides aright whom he will; the curse and the blessing in his hand.

You think he is a man like yourself;
The Saint has a mystery; the mystery of God is in his hand.

Kaygusuz Sultan says, I have read, I have known, I have understood.
Now the rule of this world is in the hand of the Perfect Man.³²²

The figure of the Mahdi also appears in his poetry, although his identity is not fully disclosed. “When the time comes and the expected day arrives / Not the least bit of infidelity remains, it ends / The denying groups indeed go to waste / The *imām-mahdi* becomes the possessor of the time.” In another one, he seems to concur that the Mahdi has already appeared. “The *imām-mahdi* has become the possessor of the universe / Leaving no reminiscence of darkness in the heart.”³²³

Gölpınarlı tries to make sense of these lines by indicating that Ahmed Sarbān might be waiting for the twelfth imam, the expected mahdi according to the Twelver Shi’te tradition. In the light of the information provided in the first chapter of this study, however, we are able to suggest that Sufi imaginations of the Mahdi differed significantly

³²¹ *MM*, 215. “*Pīr ‘Ali Sultan pīrimiz / Muhammad ‘Ali sırrımız / Nūr-ı hudādır nūrumuz / Esrār-i envār ehliyiz.*”

³²² The translation belongs to Birge who notes it to be a Bektashi *nefes* (Birge, 116).

³²³ *MM*, 60-61. “*Cün vakteristi gün gibi bir gün ‘iyān olur / Kalmaz vücudu zerrece küfrün nihān olur / Inkar eden tavāife leykin ziyān olur / Yani imām mehdi sāhib-i zaman olur.*” and “*Oldu imam mehdi sāhip-i ālem / Dilde komaz zerrece zikr-i zulem.*”

from the Twelver Shi‘i proposition. This is further attested by the lack of any reference to the twelfth imam in the Bayrami-Malāmi writings. We need other ways of making sense of these lines. There is a chance that it refers to Pir Ali or Ismail Maşuki, as the former nurtured Sarban Ahmed in a heavily messianic milieu. It is also possible that he is referring to himself as the Messiah since a couple of other Melami *pīrs* seem to have understood themselves in a similar vein.³²⁴

If Ahmed Sarban harbored this type of conviction regarding his own position, it is unlikely that he was overtly vocal about it. There is no record of him getting in trouble with the Ottoman authority. It is quite likely that his sayings circulated in the Melami circles mainly and were kept away from the outsiders. He must have behaved carefully not to attract much attention to himself and limited the amount of visitors he received.

His successor, Hüsameddin Ankaravî,³²⁵ was not as lucky as he was. Being from a small town called Kutluhan around Ankara and traveling to Hayrabolu to receive training from Ahmed Sarban, Hüsameddin returned to his hometown as Ahmed’s successor. This otherwise obscure shaykh was imprisoned in the castle of Ankara for further inspection, terms of which are unclear. Decision concerning him was left unmade, since he died in the prison around the year 964/1556-7.³²⁶

³²⁴ For Ahmad Sarban’s self-promoting poetry, see *MM*, 65. (*Alemi gaypten nişān menem öş / Cümle ecsām içinde can menem öş / ...Oldum Âdem sıfatı, zātiyem / Zāt-i pākem velī sıfatıyem / Nūr-u müphem benem, vucūda gelüp / Cār unsurla şeş cihatıyem*).

³²⁵ For information on Hüsameddin, see *MM*, 71; *ZM*, 272-4; *Semerat*, 256-7; ‘Atayî, 70; Lalizade, 33; Müstakimzade, 32b-35a; Vassaf, *Sefîne* II, 480.

³²⁶ ‘Atayî, 70. A letter found in the Register of Important Affairs orders to the qadi of Ankara to take care of a shaykh Husam’s belongings and wealth (which he seems to have gained through questionable resources). In a following letter, belonging to the date 18 Muharrem 976/1568, Shaykh Husam is mentioned to have been hanged by the authorities and the qadi is ordered to write down the effects and properties of the deceased. (Ahmed Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşılık*, 24-5) Although Shaykh Husam is mentioned to be a “*mulhid*” in this register, there is no further indication with regards to his religious convictions, activities, or his belonging to the Bayramis. In fact, this interesting letter seems to deal with Shaykh Husam’s belongings rather than his religious affairs. Ocak believes this letter pertains to Shaykh Hüsameddin. Although it is possible that this is the case, we do not seem to have any concluding

Sarı Abdullah describes circumstances of this imprisonment in terms of a troubled relationship with a local governmental authority. He narrates that Hüsameddin had attempted to build a mosque in Kutluhan, and at the time, had gotten into argument with the local voivode who had requested his son's beautiful horse for himself. Being unable to get the horse, the voivode spread the rumor that quite a number of soldiers employed by the army were helping out with the construction of the mosque and showing extreme devotion to Hüsameddin. It was likely that they were embarking upon a dissention (*fitna*) and needed to be stopped. It was upon these false accusations that Hüsameddin was imprisoned in the castle of Ankara.³²⁷

Ocak rightfully points out to the resemblance of this story to the one Elvan Çelebi provides regarding his great grandfather Baba İlyas' association with the Baba'i rebellion.³²⁸ From this point of view, *Semerat*'s account is highly dubious. It is, however, still possible that Hüsameddin was engaged in a battle with a local persona in Ankara. *Sohbetname* records an episode regarding this and describes Hüsameddin's frustration over the issue: "Hüsameddin had fallen into disagreement with a person over his plantation. He asked his disciple, Hasan Kabaduz (d.1010/1601), to saddle his horse and arrived at this person's house. He kicked the door a couple of times and banged at it with a sword in his hand. Not finding the person at home at the time, Hüsameddin turned around and said to Hasan Kabaduz: "Hasan, I thought I could suppress the reality (*Hakk*) that keeps me alive, however I came to find out that it is impossible to restrain."³²⁹ This

evidence. On the other hand, Ocak ignores that the date of this execution is twelve years apart from the date 'Atayi gives for Hüsameddin Ankaravi's death and does not revise the date of death as provided by 'Atayi. (ZM, 272-3)

³²⁷ *Semerat*, 256-7.

³²⁸ ZM, 272-3.

³²⁹ *Sohbetname*, 15a.

last comment seems to hint that, for Hüsameddin, evolving in the Melami way meant to be unable to stay silent in case of an injustice.

Sohbetname also presents valuable information on the background of Hüsameddin. It indicates that he had served several Sufi shaykhs before adhering to Ahmed Sarban and it took time for him to fully grasp the Melami standpoint: “Hüsameddin had joined the circle of Sarban Ahmad after serving many tarikat shaykhs (including a Khalwati) in complete reverence. It was, however, during one of Ahmed Sarban’s speeches that Hüsameddin became aware of his own reality and reached the Truth through the language of *barzakh*.³³⁰ (Upon this accomplishment) Ahmed Sarban sent him back to his hometown saying: ‘Our delay until this moment was also for your own benefit.’”³³¹

From another highly curious narrative in *Sohbetname*, we learn that Hüsameddin Ankaravi was making use of Fazlallah Astarabadi’s *Javidanname* in his speeches (*suhbat*). Questioned by an admirer on why he uses this notorious book, Hüsameddin explains his position in this way: “The goal (in studying *Javidanname*) is that the land we will be arriving at is a foreign land. Their language is a different one. It is the language of the real Adam. It needs to be taught and explained to the disciples. This is the aim, not benefiting from it or teaching its doctrines.”³³²

Making sense of this account is not easy, but reflecting on it in terms of Hurufi understanding of Adam in relation to the language and the messianic age seems most fruitful. Adam as the primordial man was closely associated with Fazlallah—the former

³³⁰ Ibrahim Efendi consistently calls Sufis who are not aware of Malāmi standpoint *Barzakhis* – those who stay in-between without being able to reach complete truth about the nature of things. Using the language of *barzakh* means using veiled language of Sufis.

³³¹ *Sohbetname*, 13b.

³³² *Sohbetname*, 10a.

was the first one to be taught the secret knowledge of the thirty-two letters, and thus he was believed to have spoken Persian.³³³ In the words of Bashir, “a full revelation of the letters had occurred at only two points in human history: once at the moment of creation when God had taught Adam the ‘names’, and next during Fazlallah’s experience of the manifestation of Divine Glory in Tabriz in 1374.”³³⁴ Thus the second revelation by Fazlallah, in some sense, was the return to this primordial condition, and Persian was the language of the new age, the age of divinity of the human being. It is to this language and this understanding of transformation, it seems, Ankaravi is referring when he talks about the language that the disciples need to be taught. Therefore while trying to present himself distinct from Hurufiyya, Ankaravi also showcases how deeply he was influenced by its imagery regarding the apocalyptic age.

The legacy of Ahmed Sarban and Hüsameddin Ankaravi seems to be their extraordinary contribution to the spread of Bayrami-Malāmiyye in the Balkans. Just the fact that Hüsameddin traveled from Ankara to Hayrabolu to be trained under the auspices of Ahmed, proves how quickly the Balkans embraced Melami teachings and old Anatolian centers succumbed to the new emerging wave of Rumelian establishments. Although Hüsameddin carried the center back to Ankara for a limited amount of time, his main students would mostly be from the Balkans. Among Hüsameddin Ankaravi’s disciples, future *quṭbs* of the order were included. Hamza Bali of Bosnia, Hasan Kabaduz of Bursa, and Ali Rumi (Idris Muhtefi) of Trikala (Greece) were all trained under his guidance. Each of these three men would develop a distinct Melami position, and engage

³³³ Arıkoğlu, 33-5, 43, 257.

³³⁴ Bashir, “Deciphering the Cosmos,” 183. Also see Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and Hurufis*, 81: “Infused with the metalanguage, Fazlallah was the real Adam, formed in God’s image and endowed with all his essential attributes.”

the order with new audiences. Their stories regarding the discontent and the accommodation will be told in the next sections.

Melamis in the Balkans and The Case of Hamza Bali

The Balkans, as it has already been indicated, became a home to the Bayrami-Malāmi teachings quite soon after its inception. Already with the Melami *pīr* Ahmed Sarban, Melamis were represented in Thrace at the highest level and Anatolian disciples were traveling towards this geography to receive guidance.

It has been argued that Ahmed Sarban conglomerated the Bayrami-Malāmi worldview with the already existent Bedreddini and Kalandari-Bektashi circles in this geography and put forth a new Melami identity.³³⁵ The conjunction of the Melami circles with the Bedreddinis and Bektashis, however, can hardly be taken as an occurrence that took place in Rumelia. I have tried to show in previous chapters that these relationships had already played a significant role in the emergence of the Melamiyya branch. It is quite likely that it was based on this pre-existent engagement that Melami ideas were able to find such fertile ground in the Balkans.

³³⁵ “Melamilik” *DBIA* (Ekrem Işın). Ahmed Sarban’s poetry became part of the Bektashi heritage after his death. Ahmed Sarban was also revered by the Gülşeni branch of the Khalwatiyya, which was known to have exhibited similar tendencies. See Rüya Kılıç, “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Gülşeni Tarikatı (Genel Bir Yaklaşım Denemesi),” *OTAM* 15 (2004), 209-26. Gülşeniyye was quite prominent in Hayrabolu, and Ahmed Sarban’s tomb became a Gülşeni spot after his death. Also see Gölpınarlı, *Mevlanadan Sonra Mevlevilik*, 326.

According to Mustakimzade, an important branch of Bayrami-Malāmiyye emerged from Ahmed Sarban's disciple Alaeddin of Vize (d. 970/1562-3)³³⁶ regarding whom not much can be gathered from the sources. We know, however, that he was an accomplished poet and that some of his poetry was wrongfully attributed to Ahmed Sarban. Alaeddin's most famous disciple was Gazanfer Dede (d. 974/1566-7)³³⁷ who is much better known. He was a tanner (*dabbāgh*) before adhering to Alaeddin and was known to be illiterate. Despite that he was able to gather quite many disciples from among various strands of society. He became under suspicion and was imprisoned in Istanbul for a while in order to be interrogated due to accusations of heresy. Following the ordeal, Gazanfer Dede was let go free upon Seyhulislam Ebussuud's decision regarding the lack of enough material to prove his unbelief. According to the report of the latter, Gazanfer Dede was followed closely during the time of his imprisonment and was noted to have acted appropriately, abiding by the Islamic prayers and behavior code.³³⁸

Gazanfer Dede seems to have been a respected figure within the general Sufi milieu. Muniri Belgradi in his *Silsiletu'l-Mukarrebîn* notes that many from the 'ulama' and the elite were among his disciples. According to him, people were arriving from neighboring areas to be his disciples, and Gazanfer Dede had built a convent where he was making his own living together with his disciples. According to the same source, the reason for Gazanfer Dede's getting into trouble was holding *samā'* circles where excessive behavior was detected.³³⁹

³³⁶ Regarding Alaeddin of Vize see 'Atayi, 65; Mustakimzade, 30b; on his literary persona see A. Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz, Vizeli Alāeddin: Hayatı ve Şiirleri* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitaphanesi, 1932).

³³⁷ On Gazanfer Dede see MM, 68; ZM, 306-9; 'Atayi, 87-8; Vassaf, *Sefine* II, 546-7.

³³⁸ 'Atayi, 87-8.

³³⁹ ZM, 309; from *Silsiletu'l-Mukarrebîn ve Menakibu'l-Muttakin*, 141b. Traditionally Bayrami-Malāmis did not hold any *samā'* sessions. The Rumelian branch might have changed this because according to

On the other hand, Gazanfer Dede's prominence in the Khalwati milieu of the time has also been noted. In a recent study exploring the Khalwatiyya order within the Ottoman realm, John Curry puts forth the idea that Gazanfer Dede's imprisonment might have taken place in the context of the entangled political games of the time.

During later times of trouble in the long reign of Suleyman, such as the conflict in the 950s/1550s and 960s/1560s with his potential heirs to the throne, Mustafa and Bayezid, there is evidence that some prominent shaykhs were imprisoned for suspected opposition to the sultan, perhaps because they were thought to favor one of his sons. A good example of this was the figure of Gazanfer Dede, a Bayrami shaykh who was respected by later Halveti leaders.³⁴⁰

We know very little to illuminate the background of Gazanfer Dede's arrest. It is possible that Curry's insight is true and this is why he did not receive a fatwa for execution like other Melami shaykhs. Nevertheless, the branch in Rumelia following Alaeddin of Vize, is usually described to have been respectful to the shari'a and abiding by the necessary Islamic rituals.

The other branch associated with Hamza Bali,³⁴¹ however, was laden with political inflictions and various accusations. It is also this branch that left a lasting mark

Hediyyetül Ihvan, those adhering to Alaeddin Vizevi were conducting open *dhikr* (*Hediyye*, 455). This might have happened due to the need to blend in with the other Sufi orders.

³⁴⁰ Curry, 74. Among Gazanfer Dede's disciples was Seyyid Osman Haşimi (1003/1594-5) who was also his son-in-law. (See Mustakim-zade, 84-5; also see *MM*, 68-70, *Sefine* II, 536-7). Seyyid Osman Haşimi was originally from Sivas. After completing his studies in Amasya, he came to the Thrace as a *mudarris*. When he met with Alaeddin Vizeli, he left his scholarly ambitions. He continued his training under Gazanfer Dede and then moved to Istanbul. He built a *zāwiya* in Kasımpaşa (Istanbul) and came to be known as *Sacli* Emir Efendi since he grew his hair long. In order to dispel the rumors regarding his belonging to the path of Oghlan Shaykh, he adhered to the Halveti shaykh Nureddinzade (d. 981/1574). Paradoxically this Halveti shaykh is also reported to have been deeply involved in the process of Hamza Bali's execution. The *zāwiya* in Kasımpaşa was directed by Osman Haşimi's descendants after his death. See "Saçlı Emir Tekkesi" *DBIA* (Ekrem Işın). Collection of his poetry has been studied and transliterated: Nesrin Ünlütürk, "Hâşimî Emîr Osman Dîvânçesi (Metin-Muhtevâ-Tahlil)" (Master's Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 2004.)

³⁴¹ Regarding Hamza Bali see "Hamza Bâlî" *TDVİA* (Nihat Azamat); *MM*, 72-4; *ZM*, 290-304; *Semerat*, 237; 'Atayi, 70-71; Lalizade, 34-40; Vassaf, *Sefine* II, 303-4. Regarding Hamzaviyya see Tayyib Okıç, "Quelques Documents in edits Concernant les Hamzavites," in *Proceeding of the Twenty-Second Congress of Orientalists* II, ed. Zeki Velidi Togan (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 279-286. Hamid Algar, "Hamzaviye: A Deviant Movement in Bosnian Sufism" *Islamic Studies* 36, nos. 2-3 (1418/1997): 243-61; Cihat Telci,

in Bosnia leaving a deep mark in Bosnian consciousness. Hamza Bali was a native of Bosnia, although his specific place of birth or details of his life before he became a disciple of Hüsameddin Ankaravi are unknown.³⁴² His discipleship is described to have been marked by excessive asceticism, continual hunger, and self-inflicted humiliation.³⁴³ When his shaykh Hüsameddin died, Hamza Bali traveled back to Bosnia and started to preach the principle of divine intoxication. According to Lalizade, his main audience was the frequenters of local taverns, whom he encouraged to leave the actual drunkenness for the sake of mystical intoxication. His rehabilitation of these elements of society seems to have been successful and his attraction continued to swell.³⁴⁴ His sudden popularity provoked the established religious authorities who made inquiries to the capital to put him under inspection.³⁴⁵

When he was summoned to Istanbul under the charges of heresy (*zindīqa*), Ebussuud Efendi is reported to have approved of his execution mentioning his being on the same path with Ismail Maşuki.³⁴⁶ Hamza Bali was beheaded in the close vicinity of Süleymaniye Mosque in 980/1573 in Istanbul.³⁴⁷ The place is still marked by a stone and

“Hamza Bali ve Hamzavilere Dair” *Prilozi* 46 (1997), 115-29; J. B. Brown, *The Darvishes: Or Oriental Spiritualism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 225-41.

³⁴² For a number of speculations regarding Hamza Bali’s previous life, see Algar, “The Hamzeviye” 246. His initial service to an Ottoman Vizier (Pertev Pasha, the Albanian, d. 982/1574) is quite possible. (ibid, 247).

³⁴³ This information is recorded by Lalizade, however, should be questioned since the usual Malāmi teaching did not enforce ascetic practices.

³⁴⁴ Lalizade mentions that he attracted a couple of thousand faithful disciples (*murīd-i sādīq*) in a short amount of time. (Lalizade, 37)

³⁴⁵ The process of putting Hamza Bali under inspection seems to have been set out by other *tariqa* shaykhs. Lalizade āde alludes that they were jealous of the crowds Hamza attracted and brought his case under the inspection of the ulema. Their main argument against Hamza was his being an *ummi* (uneducated) and thus unfit for guiding the crowds. (Lalizade, 37) Other sources mention the role of Nureddinzade Muslihiddin Mustafa, the Khalwati shaykh with powerful political connections.

³⁴⁶ Lalizade, 39.

³⁴⁷ ‘Atayi and Lalizade record the date of his execution as 969/ 1561-2. According to the firman which asks for the arrest of a *mulhid* called Hamza and Muniri’s *Silsile*, however, his execution took place in 980/1573. See the discussion in “Hamza Bali” TDVIA (N. Azamat). Seeing the execution, one of his adherents is reported to have killed himself (Atayi, 71). It has been argued that the influential Ottoman

an inscription today, contained in the backyard of a small mosque, which was named after him (*Hoca Hamza Camii*). His burial place in Edirnekapı Cemetery, on the other hand, is particularly well kept; marked and embellished with railings that seem to have been built not long ago.³⁴⁸

According to Algar, Hamza Bali's execution did not put an end to the movement, but rather solidified it. This is evidenced in the appointment of the Bosnian supreme judge, Bali Efendi of Sarajevo, with special administrative power for uprooting the Hamzavis in the year 982/1574-5.³⁴⁹ The impact of Hamzavi activity can also be followed through the firmans (imperial orders) that were sent to various local authorities in Bosnia and neighboring areas to have Hamzavis arrested and brought to court.³⁵⁰ The real fabric of the Hamzavi adherents is difficult to draw from the firmans. Mostly sole names are given without any identification of profession or social status. Some firmans specifically mention the possibility of their being *sipahis*, in which case they are commanded to be imprisoned rather than executed.³⁵¹ It is likely that its membership ran through different layers of society and included men of wealth and education as well as others. The fact that a discernible Melami (Hamzavi) intelligentsia emerged in Istanbul in subsequent decades is an indicator of these tendencies.

grand Vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, was murdered by a Hamzavi in 1579. He was stabbed in the heart by a petitioner who was dressed as a dervish. The dervish might have been trying to avenge *Hamza Bali*. See "Sokollu Mehmed Pasha" EI² (G. Veinstein).

³⁴⁸ Lalizade mentions that Hamza's followers bribed the executioners to release his body and buried him somewhere that is known to the circle. The grave apparently gained more recognition later on, and a railing was erected in 1281/1864 by Mehmed Ali Pasha, a follower of a Mevlevi shaykh, Osman Salaheddin Dede, who had conceived veneration for the slain Sufi. (Gölpınarlı, 73; Algar, 248) When I visited the grave in 2008, on the other hand, the railings were renovated into a more embellished structure. Hamza Bali seems to have been married although he led an adventurous life. Sources mention his having a grandson, Ibrahim ibn Demirhan ibn Hamza al-Bosnavi, who lived in Egypt. See *Osmanlı Müellifleri* I, 115.

³⁴⁹ Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul*, 48; also Atayi, 283. He was aided by Hasan al-Kafi, a member of the 'ulama' from the same area. See *Fezleke* I, 380. Both of them were generously rewarded for their efforts.

³⁵⁰ Algar, "The Hamzeviye" 249-50. These firmans were published by Ocak, see ZM 363-77.

³⁵¹ Ocak, 369.

Hamid Algar points out to the critical situation in 990/1582, ten years after the execution of Hamza Bali, mentioning the increase in the number of firmans addressed to the judges of various cities in the Balkans ordering the apprehension and execution of Hamzavis during the time.³⁵² These firmans indicate that a Bosnian by the name Mehmed b. Hasan had emerged claiming to be the new sultan replacing Hamza in Gornja Tuzla. His followers were saying “governance (*saltanat*) belong to us” and were coming together in meetings that women also participated. They were acting inappropriate with these women and were defending themselves by saying “it may be forbidden for you, but it is permissible (*halāl*) for us.”³⁵³ As can be followed from the firmans, the movement had supporters in Zvornik, Gracanica, Dolnja Tuzla and Gornja Tuzla within Bosnia, and was also influential in areas around Edirne including Rodoscuk, Burgos, and Hayrabolu. Some among these firmans describe a complete village including the imam of the mosque to have belonged to the order. These followers were inspected and eventually executed if their ties with the Hamzavis were confirmed. Finally in Sha‘ban 990/1582, a firman mentions the apprehension of the heads of the rebellion who were involved in forming a shadow government by appointing themselves to certain governmental positions. In the same document, those who helped the authorities apprehend these *mulhids* are ordered to be generously rewarded by the judges.

³⁵² Algar, “The Hamzeviye” 248-9. It seems peculiar that around the same time in Iran, Nuqtawi revolutionary activity was taking place. Nuqtawis understood the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter as a sign of the fall of the Safavids. The greatest conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter occurred in 990/1582 and its effects were extended to coincide with the end of the first Muslim millennium. (Babayan, *Mytics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 111) Therefore, it may not be coincidental that Hamzavī activity accelerated during that year. The Nuqtawi or Pisikhani movement, which traced its roots at least partly to Fazlallahs’s inspiration, exhibited antonimian traits during the Safavid period and was brutally crushed by political authorities. (See “Nuktawīyya” *Elr* (H. Algar); Abbas Amanat, “The Nuqtawi Movement of Mahmud Pisikhani and his Persian Cycle of Mystical-Materialism,” in *Medieval Isma‘ili History and Thought*, ed. Farhad Daftary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³⁵³ Ocak, 367-8.

Among all Melamis, Hamza Bali and his adherents receive the least sympathy in the eyes of the chronicler ‘Atayi. He vehemently supports Kadi Bali’s efforts to uproot them, ascribing licentiousness to Hamza Bali’s followers. “Saying the path (*tarīkat*) and the truth (*hakīkat*), they have lifted the curtain of *shari‘at* and entered the realm of religious permissiveness (*ibāhat*).”³⁵⁴ He also pictures them to be of little intellect and poor behavior, lamenting that they still exist in the Balkans during his own time (around 1630s). “Even now, those mentally deficient heretics of corrupt belief are not lacking in those regions; may God destroy them.” ‘Atayi’s open rejection might be stemming from personal dealings with Hamzavis. He is mentioned to have worked as a *qadi* in some important Balkan cities (Lofcha, Varna, Skopje, etc) between the years 1608-35. Thus he was likely to have been agitated by the Hamzaviyye and mirrors the official point of view that perceived Hamzavis as an imminent danger that is destructive to the roots of religion and government.

‘Atayi’s portrayal of Hamzavis, however, is disputed by another persona of the time, Muniri Belgradi. Being from Bosnia, Muniri might be viewed as exhibiting the local reaction against the execution of Hamza Bali. He was a judge and was known for several treatises he wrote against the practices he deemed unsuitable with the *shari‘a*,³⁵⁵ which makes it even more interesting that he sees the execution to have taken place unjustly. Muniri indicates that Hamza Bali’s execution had taken place due to the endeavors of the Khalwati shaykh Nureddinzade Muslihiddin Mustafa, who had

³⁵⁴ ‘Atayi, 283.

³⁵⁵ Muniri wrote against *futuwwa* organizations as well as Sufi practice of *samā‘*. Lamekani’s respond to his *risala* regarding *samā‘* is included in Mustakimzade, 37a. For information regarding his critique of *futuwwa* practices, which he understands to be heretical, see: Saffet Sarıkaya, “Nisābu’l-Intisāb’da Esnaf Teskilati ve Fütüvvetnamelere Yönelik Eleştiriler,” *e-makalat Mezhep Arastirmalari Dergisi* 3/1 (2010): 43-64.

contacted various men of governance in Istanbul and had made sure that a sergeant was sent for the arrest of the shaykh. Once this arrest had taken place, Hamza Bali was imprisoned in Istanbul and was killed secretly. According to Muniri, Nureddinzade was involved throughout the whole process. Another sixteenth-century source, Seyyid Nizamoğlu's *Camî'u'l-'Avarîf* also confirms his deep involvement with the execution.³⁵⁶

Muniri also indicates that Hamza Bali had followers from among the court officials, janissaries, and notables, some of whom he had personally met. He notes that these people adhered to the concept of divine love (*'ishk*), and exhibited extraordinary love and dedication towards their shaykh whom they called "*sultân*." He also describes, how in certain gatherings, he had heard from various people that the execution had taken place unfairly. According to Muniri, Hamza Bali's execution was due to his saying: "I can send the plague away from Istanbul if I want to," and not backing down from this claim. For Muniri this claim could not be enough for killing someone as an unbeliever according to the rules of the shari'a.

Thanks to Muniri's account, it is possible to see that certain segments of the Ottoman society viewed the execution to have taken place unjustly. The general perception, however, seems to have been inclined towards perceiving the Hamzavis as complete heretics. Thus the execution of Hamza Bali and the following ordeal in the Balkans left a destructive mark on the Bayrami-Malāmis who henceforth came to be known as Hamzavis. It was meant to be a derogatory term.³⁵⁷ The Rumelian branch of the Bayrami-Malāmiyya, however, proudly owned up to the title. While we never see the title

³⁵⁶ See the discussion in "Hamza Bali" TDVIA (Azamat); based on Muniri's *Silsiletul Mukarrebîn*, 113b-114a, and *Cām'iu'l-'avārîf*, Suleymaniye Lib., Şehid Ali Paşa coll, no. 2335, 17b.

³⁵⁷ Even Niyazi Misri, an ecstatic Sufi who got into trouble with the political authority various times, wrote in his poetry, "The Hamzavis are degraded in all societies. / *Cümle millette Hamzavi hordur*." See Ocak, 304.

Melami in the tombstones, for instance, the title Hamzavi appears on Oghlan Shaykh Ibrahim Efendi's tombstone indicating his identification with the epithet. Writing more than a century after Hamza's execution, Lalizade comments that many valuable men still suffer under the accusation of being Hamzavis. He understands this blame-worthy title to be inflicted by God who wants to conceal Melamis (understood as the chosen few) under a seemingly shameful name.³⁵⁸

Conclusion

During the second half of the sixteenth century, the Bayrami-Malāmi order seems to have solidified its teachings and made use of an apocalyptic vision. During the first decades of the sixteenth century, Pir Ali emerges as the figure that put together an active reactionary mode. The details of Pir Ali's way of living was provided based on the account of Askeri, a disciple of Pir Ali who penned *Mir'atu'l-'ishk* to clean his master's name and point out to his rightful teachings. While Askeri renounces any messianic claims and antinomian practices pertaining to his master, he follows an entirely different course regarding his son, Ismail Maşuki. He despises the latter and accuses him of acting rebelliously against the wishes of his father. Askeri's storyline, however, is conflicting with his own reminiscence of various other occurrences, and it is quite likely that Ismail was sent to Istanbul having blessed by his father as well as by at least one particular Akhi Baba from Kayseri, indicating the social background behind Ismail's web of activities.

Ismail Maşuki's execution did not put an end to the messianic worldview that was engrained within the Bayrami-Malāmi understanding. This is indicated in the poetry of

³⁵⁸ Lalizade , 40.

Ahmed Sarban regarding the appearance of the Mahdi, as well as in Hüsameddin's employment of Hurufi imagery in order to point out to the universal transformation. Nevertheless, a more solidified reaction reemerged in the Balkans under the banner of the Hamzaviyya in the following decades.

The blow taken by the Hamzavi persecution in the Balkans was so destructive that in the following decades, Bayrami-Malāmis (or Hamzavis) searched for new ways of presenting themselves to the public. In the seventeenth-century, Istanbul became the new center where this transformed Melami imagery emerged and successfully took root among the elite of Istanbul. This development will be narrated in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. The Order Redefining Itself and Settling In Istanbul

Towards Finding Ways of Accommodation: Hasan Kabaduz of Bursa

After the destructive mark left by the execution of Hamza Bali, another disciple of Husameddin Ankaravi, Hasan Kabaduz of Bursa (the tailor, d.1010/1601-2),³⁵⁹ was able to garner some positive imagery for the Bayrami-Malāmis. Although not perceived as the *pīr* by all adherents (he does not appear in the genealogical chain provided by Sarı Abdullah and Lalizade), Hasan Kabaduz left a significant legacy by exemplifying the new method through which Bayrami-Malāmis carved out some space for themselves in Istanbul during the seventeenth century.

Mustakimzade introduces Hasan Kabaduz as one of those who had gained virtues of sainthood from Ankaravi. He also adds that, a change in appearances (*tağyīr-i ziyy-u sūret*) had become necessary in those following his way. This might allude to their

³⁵⁹ For information on Kabaduz see *MM*, 78; Öngören, *Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf*, 176-7; Mustakimzade, 35a (a letter from Ankaravi to Kabaduz can be found in Mustakimzade, 34a.)

wearing Bayrami clothing, carrying out traditional Bayrami practices, and employing a cautionary tone in their speeches regarding the mystical vision of oneness.

Hasan Kabaduz was able to attract high-quality disciples who were able to enhance his prudent vision. Among these, Lamekani Huseyin (d. 1035/1625) and Abdullah of Bosnia (d. 1054/1645) specifically became well known and left a broad impact among the educated classes of Istanbul.

Lamekani Huseyin³⁶⁰ was quite likely from Pest in Hungary and had knowledge of Arabic and Persian. It is not exactly known when he came to Istanbul, and then went to Bursa where he adhered to Hasan Kabaduz. We are told that following the latter's death, he functioned as a representative of Idris Muhtefi, the Bayrami-Malāmi *pīr* of the time in Istanbul.³⁶¹ Lamekani located himself in the vicinity of Şah Sultan Mosque in Cerrahpasa and held circles of instruction that were attended by city's respected figures. Various figures from among the notables, the 'ulama', and the poets are mentioned to have benefited from his teachings. Among these, Vizier Ferhad Pasha (d.1004/1595)³⁶² should be specifically cited. Lamekani's poetry was circumspect; some of it became well known, were composed and recited in the Sufi convents.

Abdullah Bosnevi,³⁶³ on the other hand, was born in Bosnia in 992/1584. After receiving primary and secondary education in Bosnia, he completed his studies in

³⁶⁰ For more information see "Lāmekānī Hüseyin Efendi" TDVIA (Slobodan Ilic); *MM*, 80-84; Atayî, 64, 760; Mustakimzade, 35b- 39a (includes Lamekani's letter to Muniri regarding *samā'*); Vassaf II, 489-92. Bilal Kemikli, "Hüseyin Lāmekānī Efendinin İnsan-i Kāmil Görüşü: Risāle-i Vahdetnāme." *Kubbealtı Akademisi Mecmuası* 26, no.3 (1997): 30-36.

³⁶¹ *MM*, 78.

³⁶² See "Ferhad Pasha" *EL*² (V. J. Parry). Ferhad Pasha was of Albanian origin, being raised in the palace school called *Enderun*. He rose to fame during the latter phase of Kanuni's reign. He served as the vizier and then as commander-in-chief for the Ottoman army during the campaigns against Persia in 1573-4. He served as the Grand Vizier between 1591-2, and then in 1595 for a short period of time.

³⁶³ See "Abdullah Bosnevi" TDVIA (Mustafa Kara); *MM*, 79-80; *SE*, 550-52; Christopher Shelley, "Abdullah Effendi: Commentator on the *Fusus al-Hikam*," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 17

Istanbul. For a few years he stayed in Bursa where he adhered to Hasan Kabaduz. In 1045/1636, he traveled to Egypt, and then visited Mecca for pilgrimage. He was influential in spreading the Order to these areas. On his way back from the pilgrimage, he stopped in Damascus for a while and led an ascetic life in the tomb of Ibn ‘Arabi for a while. He then returned to Konya where he lived for some time and died. He was buried next to Ibn ‘Arabi’s famous disciple Sadreddin Konevi (d. 673/1274) in Konya. Bosnevi was deeply interested in Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings and wrote a commentary on his *Fusus al-Hikam*, for which he was greatly admired among the Ottoman intelligentsia. Abdülmecid Sivasi,³⁶⁴ for instance, a vocal critic of the Order in the seventeenth century, had only good things to say about Bosnevi as well as Lamekasni.³⁶⁵

These two figures, especially Lamekani, displayed a Bayrami-Malāmi portrayal that would become more common in the following decades in Istanbul. The ties Lamekani was able to establish within the high classes of the society were further developed by various educated figures including Sarı Abdullah and Oğlan Shaykh

(1995): 75-83; Resid Hafizovic, “A Bosnian commentator on the *Fusus al-Hikam*,” *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society* 47 (2010): 87-107; Abdullah Kartal, “Abdullah Bosnevî ve Merâtib-i Vücūd ile İlgili Bir Risalesi” (Master’s Thesis, Marmara University, 1996).

³⁶⁴ Abdülmecid Sivasi (d. 1049/1639) was an important Khalwati shaykh at the time. He was well educated in the exoteric as well as the esoteric, and was a vocal defender of the Sufi practices against the puritan Kadizādeli movement of the time. For more information on his involvement see Madeleine Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, 133-4. His involvement in this discussion did not prevent him from launching a war against the Hamzavis who were heretics for him. Sivasi’s stern reaction against Idrīs is mentioned by Lalizade who records on the authority of Sarı Abdullah Efendi that Ali Idrīs Bey petitioned for removal of Sivasi from Istanbul to Bursa in order to put an end to his attacks (Lalizade, 47-8). Sivasi’s reaction against the Malāmis seems to pose a striking discrepancy with his reaction against the puritans at first glance. However, there is a good chance that Abdülmecid Efendi saw himself as the defender of “good Sufism” while he was as ruthless against what he considered to be “bad Sufism.” It is interesting that the most outspoken attackers of Malāmis were Khalwatis (Nureddinzade against Hamza Bali, Sivasi against Idrīs), since Khalwatiyya itself was quite controversial due to its questionable practices (*sama*’ and excessive *dhikr* ceremonies, etc). Their attack against the Malāmis can be seen as a way of detracting the attention from their own questionable ways and turning the table against other Sufis with doubtful teachings.

³⁶⁵ See Tümer, *Hediyye*, 454.

Ibrahim. Efforts of these figures and two conflicting images regarding the Order in Istanbul in the seventeenth century will be explored in the next section.

Entering a New Phase: Bayrami-Malāmis in Istanbul

Sarı Abdullah, Lalizade, and Mustakimzade collectively mention Idris Muhtefi (*Mukhtaft*, the Hidden, d.1024/1615)³⁶⁶ as the successor of Hamza Bali. This mysterious and yet influential character profoundly changed the Bayrami-Malāmi audience in Istanbul and shifted the way in which the Order functioned. The account ‘Atayi provides for him is in many ways astonishing, and sets quite a different tone than his treatment of Hamza Bali. He is quite respectful to the shaykh and tends to absolve him of charges of heresy.

According to ‘Atayi, who remembers this Bayrami-Malāmi *pīr* as Shaykh Ali Idris, Idris lived in Istanbul being known as Haji Ali Bey by his neighbors and kept his Bayrami-Malāmi affiliations a secret. He was a respected man, being known as a prior merchant who had made considerable wealth. ‘Atayi also reports that he was from a

³⁶⁶ For general information on Idrīs, see “Idrīs-i Muhtefi” TDVIA (Nihat Azamat); “Idris-i Muhtefi” DBIA (Ekrem Işın); *MM*, 123-8; *ZM*, 310-13; Atayi, 602-3. *Semerat*, 258-63, Lalizade, 41-9; Mustakimzade, 43a-55a (he calls him *Hāje Ali al-Rūmi*); Vassaf, II, 507-16.

virtuous family in Tırhala³⁶⁷ and was raised by his fraternal uncle who was a tailor working for Rüstem Pasha.³⁶⁸ During the military expedition against Iran in 955/1548-9, Ali joined his uncle who took time to visit shaykh Husameddin in his residence around Ankara. During their visit, Husameddin Ankaravi grew fond of the young man, accepted him to his service and gave him the name Idrīs due to his training in tailoring.³⁶⁹ After Ankaravi's death (which occurred in 964/1556 according to 'Atayi), Idrīs settled in Istanbul and acted as the head of the Bayrami-Malāmi order for almost sixty years.

'Atayi seems to have perceived Hamza Bali and Idris Muhtefi as variant successors of the same shaykh, Husameddin Ankaravi. He, however, provides no insight into Ali's affiliations with the executed shaykh Hamza Bali who had quite likely spent ample time with Ali during his years of training. Thus in 'Atayi's account, Pir Ali does not share much commonality with the Hamzaviyya in Bosnia.

We may assume based on Pir Ali's discipleship under Husameddin Ankaravi that he had witnessed the difficulty that Husameddin Ankaravi and Hamza Bali had gone through with the Ottoman authorities. These painful experiences are likely to have taught him the need for secrecy and circumspection. Thus 'Atayi reports that Shaykh Ali Idris practiced secrecy in a careful way and constructed two identities for himself. In his neighborhood he was known as Haji Ali Bey, was considered to be a pious man who received much respect. Among the Bayrami-Malāmis, on the other hand, he was known by the name Idris and was considered to be the leader whose identity needed to be kept a

³⁶⁷ The Turkish name for Trikkala, a town in western Thessaly (Greece).

³⁶⁸ Rüstem Pasha (d. 1561) was originally a Croatian from Bosnia and was raised to become an Ottoman general and statesman. He was the son-in-law and the grand vizier of Süleyman the Magnificent.

³⁶⁹ Idris is mentioned as a prophet in the Qur'an and has been identified with the biblical Enoch by some scholars. In *futuwwa* traditions, each prophet was accepted to be the head of a certain craft and Idris was believed to have been the patron of tailors. In the light of the information provided by Lalizade, Ali was around twenty-four years of age at the time. (Lalizade mentions that he was eighty-three years old when he died in 1024, which puts his date of birth around 931/1524-5.)

secret. During the time, there were harsh adversaries against Idris and he had become the scapegoat in the hubbub of society. ‘Atayi describes the situation in a striking way:

The public is divided into two regarding their stance with him: some regard him a heretic, while others verify his miracles. Sivasi Efendi³⁷⁰ and Shaykh Ömer,³⁷¹ who were both respected shaykhs in the city, claimed his heresy from the pulpits for quite some time and finally succeeded in obtaining a firman from the sultan for his arrest and execution. However, they were unable to locate him. One day, Ömer Efendi invited over his neighbor by the name Haji Ali Bey. Ömer Efendi perceived him to be a dear brother, believed in his faith and righteousness as well as his intellectual comprehension. [After they discussed several issues, Ömer Efendi asked Ali Bey’s help on repelling the dissidence that had emerged in the city.] “...A heretic by the name Idris, whose heresy is apparent and execution is necessary, has appeared. He led some thousands of Muslims into perversion (*dalālet*) and allured many hedonistic people. It has been a while (that we are looking for him) and nobody came forward to see his blood spilled. We could not collect any information on his whereabouts, let alone who he is. After all, we will not be able get information unless we torment one of his adherents.” Ali Bey, in response, asked him whether he had ever met this person and heard him admit to his wrong-doing or whether he possessed necessary *shar‘i* knowledge for his execution. When Ömer Efendi responded with a “no” to these questions, Ali Bey said: “if you do not know these things, how is it that you choose to slander a Muslim to this extent?” Ömer Effendi regretted saying these things and apologized. Upon this, Ali Bey lifted the veil of secrecy and said: “I am Idris about whom they talk. My name is Ali, and my epithet is Idris. What do you think of me?” Ömer Efendi started apologizing and asking for forgiveness and stated that he knows him as a respected *pīr* who is exalted in righteousness and piety.”³⁷²

Regardless of whether this conversation between Ömer Efendi and Ali Idris Bey really took place, ‘Atayi’s narrative indicates how certain segments of the society viewed the controversy. It seems that there was a sustainable audience among the intellectuals who were attracted to Ali Idris’s teachings and viewed attacks against him quite troubling and hurtful. ‘Atayi confirms this fact and relates that when Idris Efendi died, he left behind considerable wealth and followers from among government officials, notables, and ‘ulama’.

³⁷⁰ Regarding Abdulmejid Sivasi, see the footnote in p. 2.

³⁷¹ Khalwati shaykh Omer Efendi (d. 1624), was the presiding shaykh of the Tercüman Yunus lodge in Fatih, Istanbul.

³⁷² ‘Atayi, 603. Katip Çelebi’s (d. 1068/1657) *Fezleke* quotes the same incident from ‘Atayi (*Fezleke*, I, 373-4). Mustakimzade also quotes ‘Atayi word by word.

Among these was Bezcizade Mehmed Muhiddin (d. 1020/1611),³⁷³ a well-educated man who was nurtured in the Khalwati path. He was originally from Konya and had met Idris when he came to Istanbul in order to reside over several convents for short periods of time. He was also a poet who wrote under the epithet of “Muhyi” and was a successful composer.

Tifli (d. 1070/1660),³⁷⁴ on the other hand, was a famous storyteller (*maddah*) and was a close companion of Murad IV (r. 1623-40). He was also a poet of considerable success, known for exerting a fresh outlook in his poems. According to Gölpınarlı, Tifli was attracted to the Order through his companionship with Hakiki, who was author of *Irshadname*, one of the first treatises written to explain the Bayrami-Malāmi worldview. Tifli was also known to be a close companion of Sarı Abdullah.³⁷⁵

Among the ‘ulama’, Seyhülislam Mustafa Efendi (Ebu’l-meyamin, d. 1015/1606; grand mufti 1603-4, 1606)³⁷⁶ and Iznikli Fazıl Ali Efendi (1018/ 1609)³⁷⁷ are reported to have been included in Idris’ circle. There is a chance that Sarı Abdullah’s great-uncle Grand Vizier Halil Pasha (d. 1040/1630) was also included among the adherents, however, he was primarily known for his dedication t/o the Jalwati shaykh, Hudz’i.

The vital standing ground for Idris, on the other hand, seems to have been his closest disciples that he had formed from within the craft guilds. *Peştemalcılar Çarşısı* (bazaar where a specific fabric made from Turkish cotton was sold) had become a center for Idris’s adherents who functioned as the primary guides (*rehber*) for the order. Close

³⁷³ See *MM*, 128-30; Yilmaz, 237-9; “Mehmed Muhyiddin Bezcizāde” *TDVİA* (Hasan Aksoy); ‘Atayi, 607; Mustakimzade, 46a-47a.

³⁷⁴ See, “Tifli” *EF* (Mehmet Kalpaklı and W. G. Andrews); “Tifli Ahmed Çelebi” *TDVİA* (Bekir Çınar); *MM*, 130-5; Mustakimzade, 48a-50b.

³⁷⁵ *MM*, 132.

³⁷⁶ *MM*, 135; ‘Atayi 511-3, Mustakimzade, 79b-80a.

³⁷⁷ *MM*, 136; Mustakimzade, 80b-81b; *SE*, II, 528-9.

connections between this particular market and the Order continued to exist until 1908 when the market was burned down in a fire.³⁷⁸

It is quite possible that some sort of spiritual hierarchy and a specific initiation ritual was established during the time of Idrīs. Some elders came to be known as the “lookers into the heart” (*gönle bakıcılar*)³⁷⁹ who were able to initiate large numbers of people into the order without them having to meet the *quṭb* Idris.

Around this time, specific treatises written with the aim of explaining the Order’s worldview start to appear. As the order spreads into the elite of Istanbul, more expositions of the teachings seem to have been needed for practical and pedagogical reasons. One important example of this current is *Irshadname* written in the year 1009/1600-1 by a certain Hakiki (d.1050/1640) who seems to have been an adherent of Idris Muhtefi.³⁸⁰ *Irshadname*’s contribution to the Bayrami-Malāmi literature is significant, since Sarı Abdullah and Lalizade use verbatim quotations from this small treatise. Passages from this treatise can be found in the fifth chapter of this study.

Sarı Abdullah Efendi

³⁷⁸ A.Gölpınarlı, *Türkiyede Mezhepler ve Tarikatler* (Istanbul: Inkılap Yay, 1997), 262.

³⁷⁹ Lalizade mentions that during the time of Idris, each novice was appointed a *rehber* (guide) and a *gönle bakıcı* (looker in the heart). It was during this time that Sarı Abdullah was initiated into the order. As was the case in the latter’s initiation, “looking into the heart” might signify the ritual where several members of the order gather around the novice and gaze into his heart leaving him in a state of ecstasy. We know about this ritual thanks to Lalizade’s record of Sarı Abdullah’s initiation. (Lalizade, 43-5)

³⁸⁰ *Irshadname (Risale-i Hakiki)*, Suleymaniye Library, Mihrişah Sultan coll., no. 203, 47b-63a. Based on the report of Mustakimzade, Gölpınarlı believes that Hakiki was initiated into the order by Lamekani Hüseyin Efendi and functioned as a *rehber* within the order during the time of Idris Muhtefi. (MM, 211; Mustakimzade, 37a).

Sarı Abdullah Efendi (d.1071/1665)³⁸¹ should be specifically cited as a figure who contributed greatly to the transformation of the Bayrami-Malāmi imagery. He was the son of a prince Sayyid Muḥammad who had escaped from the Maghrib. His mother, on the other hand, was a daughter of Mehmed Pasha (d.997/1558), who was the brother of Grand Vizier Halil Pasha (d.1038/ 1629).³⁸² Having lost his father as well as his grandfather on his mother's side at an early age, Sarı Abdullah was raised by his adoptive father, Hacı Hüseyin Ağa (d.1040/ 1630),³⁸³ and his uncle Grand Vizier Halil Pasha. The latter made sure that Sarı Abdullah received a good education and sheltered him as much as he could throughout his career at the court. Abdullah worked as his private secretary and accompanied him on various campaigns. Khalil Pasha was a devout disciple of the Jalwati shaykh Hudai (d. 1038/1628), and made sure that his nephew was raised under the spiritual training of this shaykh. Intellectually Sarı Abdullah showcased interest in the works of Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi. He penned a well-received commentary on the Mathnawi and preserved strong connections with the Mevlevi circles throughout his life. Sarı Abdullah, however, saw himself essentially as a Bayrami³⁸⁴ and put forth various writings in defense of the Bayrami-Malāmi worldview.

Sarı Abdullah's affiliation with the Bayrami-Malāmiyya was established thanks to the efforts of his adoptive father, Hüseyin Ağa. Lalizade reports an incident that sounds quite like an initiation ceremony where Sarı Abdullah was first introduced into

³⁸¹ On Sarı Abdullah see "Şarı 'Abd Allāh Efendi" EI² (Cl. Huart, Kathleen Burrill); "Şarı Abdullah Efendi" *TDVİA* (Nihat Azamat); *MM*, 137-42; Lalizade , 43-9; Vassaf II, 521-7; Mustakimzade, 51a-72b.

³⁸² See "Khalil Pasha Kaysariyyeli" EI² (A. H. de Groot).

³⁸³ We do not know much about him other than his being an adherent of Idrīs Muhtefi and being buried in close vicinity of the latter's grave. Mustakimzade, 48a.

³⁸⁴ Yılmaz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf*, 349.

the secretive world of Bayrami-Malāmis.³⁸⁵ According to this, when Abdullah was a young boy around the age of fifteen, his step-father, saying he wanted to introduce him to the real men of God before he died, took him to the corners of the Order at Kırkçeşme marketplace. After making sure that there is permission from the *Efendi* (referring to Idris Muhtefi), twelve men (all artisans working in neighboring shops as weavers of cloth) gathered. They asked Abdullah what his goal was. Abdullah responded, as instructed by his stepfather, that he wanted God. The elder one said, “Then eliminate everything other than God from your heart and turn completely to Him. We’ll see what kind of favor our *Efendi* will do.” Then those twelve men made a circle around him and collectively turned their eyes into his heart and gazed. After a certain point, Sarı Abdullah remembered losing consciousness, and when being awoken, seeing a light stemming from his heart. Trying to hide the light with his hands, he was assured by the those men that he was the only one who could see this light and that he should not worry about other people noticing it.³⁸⁶

Fascinated by the mysterious figure he knew as the “Efendi,” Sarı Abdullah dreamed about meeting the head of the men he met at Kırkçeşme. He was able to achieve this goal when Hüseyin Ağa took him for a Friday communal prayer to the mosque of Ayasofya. As they were about to leave the mosque, Sarı Abdullah noticed that Hüseyin Ağa had retreated to the side and respectfully greeted someone. Looking back to see the person, Abdullah saw an old man walking towards them. Once this old man approached

³⁸⁵ Lalizade , 43-5.

³⁸⁶ Sarı Abdullah noted carrying this light around within his heart until he was a grown man, until the day he was enticed by a woman and committed adultery. Having lost the light after this incident, he felt devastated. Feeling the change in his behavior, Hüseyin Ağa inquired about the situation and upon hearing about the adultery, he took him back to the corners of Malāmis in Kırkçeşme. Here Sarı Abdullah was punished according to the rules of the sharia (*hadd*, beaten for a number of times), and he felt better, although he was unable to perceive the previous light stemming from his heart from this point on. (Mustakimzade, 54b-55a).

and looked at Sarı Abdullah, the latter again felt dizzy and lost consciousness. After being carried home by Hüseyin Ağa, he learnt that the peculiar old man was indeed Idris Muhtefi, the *quṭb* of the time and the head of the men he met at Kırkçeşme.³⁸⁷

Later on when he started to work as a secretary for Khalil Pasha, Sarı Abdullah would make sure that Idris Muhtefi's petition for removal of Abdulmecid Sivasi from Istanbul to Bursa reached to the hands of the Pasha.³⁸⁸

After Idris Muhtefi's death, however, Sarı Abdullah seems to have fallen apart from the Order, probably due to his busy schedule that included accompanying his great-uncle on military campaigns. Although he had adhered to Idris' successor, Hacı Kabayi, he would become aware of his death in quite specific circumstances. According to the account provided by Mustakimzade, Sarı Abdullah was accompanying the Pasha in an expedition in Iran, which ended with an embarrassing defeat for the Ottomans. Khalil Pasha was removed from his position as the Grand Vizier, and the two had to return to Istanbul secretly disguising themselves as ordinary people. During the journey, they stopped by a village where they had to spend the night. Sarı Abdullah was greatly welcomed in the house he stayed in, although the man of the house was not available. When the time came for going to bed and Sarı Abdullah retrieved to the room in which he would spend the night, a servant came in and informed him that the lady of the house wanted to see him. Confused with regards to the intent of the woman, Sarı Abdullah approached the gate for the women's section of the house. The woman called him by his name and explained that she and her husband were Bayramis and that she had seen him before. She told him that the *pīr* Kabayi had died a couple of days ago, and inquired from

³⁸⁷ Lalizade , 45-6.

³⁸⁸ Ibid, 47-9.

Sarı Abdullah if he knew who his successor was. Sarı Abdullah was surprised by the woman's question, indicated that he did not even know that the *pīr* had died, and regretted falling so apart from the Order.³⁸⁹

After his return to Istanbul, Sarı Abdullah tried to learn who the current head of the Order was for a long time. His friends were not willing to tell him due to the rules of secrecy. Searching in his heart who the current *quṭb* might have been, Sarı Abdullah came across Sütçü Beşir Ağa during a visit to the grave of Kabayî. In his heart, he knew that the latter was the current *quṭb*. Sarı Abdullah pledged allegiance to him despite being chastised by those around him for being late.³⁹⁰ In the following years, he seems to have kept a close relationship with Sütçü Beşir Ağa and visited him often. This close relationship initiated rumors that Sarı Abdullah was a Hamzavi, which was an unpleasing accusation for a man of his social status.³⁹¹

Among Sarı Abdullah's writings, the *Semerat* is specifically important for showcasing his deep dedication to Bayrami-Malāmis. Although this work seems to be an overall description of various Sufi orders at first glance, it is a meticulously planned defense for the inflicted branch of Bayramis. This is evident in the last pages of the book where Sarı Abdullah explains why he wrote the book. He says that in a setting where writings of Rumi were discussed, he had heard derogatory remarks regarding some Bayramis who had gone astray. He was greatly saddened by these remarks and tried to assure those who were present that this branch of Bayramis indeed consisted of truthful

³⁸⁹ Mustakimzade, 65b-66a.

³⁹⁰ Mustakimzade, 67a-b.

³⁹¹ Yilmaz, 349; based on *Safayî Tezkiresi*, 514.

Muslims. Following this incident Sarī Abdullah says, he decided to put down his vision into writing.³⁹²

Nevertheless in the *Semerat*, he tries to prove the high status of Bayrami-Malāmis by making use of the concept of *malāmat*, indicating that those who are chosen by God to be the real *awliyā'* are destined to be condemned by people surrounding them. Thus the *silsila* he provides for the Khalwatis (who are mentioned for being the forbearers of Bayramis) is not a virtual one, but is interrupted by figures that were inflicted with accusations and executed in the same manner with the Bayramis. He mentions Dhu'n-Nun al-Misri (d. 246/861),³⁹³ Hallaj (ex. 309/922),³⁹⁴ 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani (ex. 526/1131),³⁹⁵ Majd ad-Din Baghdadi (ex. 616/1219),³⁹⁶ Shams Tabrizi (d. 645/1247),³⁹⁷ and Nesimi³⁹⁸ among these Sufis. He indicates that these men were granted with a special gift for understanding and experiencing God in a distinct way, but were bullied and punished for it because ordinary people could not understand their standpoints. Therefore

³⁹² *Semerat*, 306-7.

³⁹³ This Egyptian Sufi is commonly regarded as the one of most important forbearers of the Sufi teaching. See "Dhu'l-Nūn, Abu'l-Fayḍ" *EF*² (M. Smith). He was prisoned for a short while in Baghdad through the end of his life. Sarī Abdullah introduces him as a master of *malāmat* and draws similarities between the troubles he went through and the current troubles of Bayrami-Malāmis. "Dhu'n-Nun al-Misri was one of the masters of *malāmat*, he was one of a kind during his time on the issues of secrecies of oneness, and asceticism. The people of Egypt accused him of possessing heretic beliefs and they kept denying his distinct spiritual status. Until he died, nobody was aware of his greatness and glory. It is interesting that even in our time, most of the *awliya'* continue to suffer from vilifications and have not been able to get away from similar accusations." (*Semerat*, 161-2.)

³⁹⁴ See "al-Hallāj" *EF*² (L. Massignon; L. Gardet).

³⁹⁵ See "Ayn al-Kudāt al-Hamadhānī" *EF*² (J. K. Teubner). This well-educated brilliant shaykh was brutally executed for holding beliefs close to the Ismailis, the most hated heretics of the time. *Semerat*'s account on him is quite interesting and indicates that Sufi circles around Sarī Abdullah commonly read his works.

³⁹⁶ It is interesting that Majd ad-Din's name appear in *Semerat* in the same valley with Hallaj and 'Ayn al-Qudat. Majd ad-Din Baghdadi was a Kubrawi shaykh and was executed due to the anger of the Sultan upon hearing he had secretly married his mother. Although context might have been different, Majd ad-Din's name does not commonly appear in the list of Sufis who were executed for heretical beliefs.

³⁹⁷ Shams, the enigmatic friend/shaykh of Rumi was quite possibly killed by Rumi's younger son who was bothered by his unusual behavior and close relationship with his father. See "Shams-i Tabrīz(i)" *EF*² (Annemarie Schimmel).

³⁹⁸ See the section on HurufiHurufis for more information on Nesimi.

Sarı Abdullah underlines that accusations against Bayrami-Malāmis are not much different from the ones employed against these eminent figures of the Sufi past.

In the following decades, Sarı Abdullah's use of the imagery of *malāmat* flourished and he extensively relied on Ibn 'Arabi's trajectory in which *Melamis* are presented as the highest degree of all men. For this purpose, Sarı Abdullah put together Ibn 'Arabi's expositions in the *Futuhāt al-Makkiyya* regarding the *Melamis* under the title *Mir'at al-Aşfiyā' fī Şifat Malamatiyat al-Aşfiyā'*. Thus he was able to establish a tradition of citing Ibn 'Arabi's many references to the concept of *malāmat* when Bayrami-Malāmis tried to define and present their "way." In this sense, Bayrami-Malāmiyya was understood as the highest possible spiritual degree, representatives of whom were concealed by God due to divine jealousy.

Sarı Abdullah was also useful in introducing this new imagery of Bayrami-Malāmis to the elite including various poets, ulama, and men of governance. His close association with Mevlevi circles enabled his vision to be known in this milieu. Among these men was Neşati Ahmed Dede (d.1085/1674)³⁹⁹ who was a well-known poet of Mevlevi coloring. Cevri (d. 1065/1654)⁴⁰⁰ was also a famous poet and calligrapher who produced several hand-written copies of various Sarı Abdullah's writings. Among the 'ulama', Sarı Abdullah was influential on figures such as Lali Shaykh Mehmed (d.1119/1707)⁴⁰¹ who was his sister's son. After graduating from the madrasa, Shaykh Mehmed held various positions including the office of judge in Mekke and Istanbul. He

³⁹⁹ MM, 143-7; Mustakimzade, 67b; "Neşati" *TDVİA* (Bayram Ali Kaya).

⁴⁰⁰ MM, 148-52, Mustakimzade, 67b-71a; Yilmaz, 263-4; "Cevrî İbrahim Çelebi" *TDVİA* (Hüseyin Ayan).

⁴⁰¹ Mm, 151-2; Mustakimzade, 71b-73b; "Lalizade Abdalbaki" *TDVİA* (Nihat Azamat).

also sustained strong ties with Bayrami-Malāmi figures throughout his life. His son Lalizade Abdalbaki continued the family tradition by preserving these ties.

Oğlan Shaykh Ibrahim Efendi

While Sarı Abdullah seems to have achieved a healthy balance between his Bayrami-Malāmi and various other dedications, another significant figure in the seventeenth-century Istanbul, Oğlan Shaykh Ibrahim Efendi (d.1065/ 1655),⁴⁰² portrayed a different picture. His career and expositions differ significantly from those of Sarı Abdullah and exhibit a different side of the Bayrami-Malāmi activity at the time.⁴⁰³

Ibrahim Efendi was from the Balkans,⁴⁰⁴ born into a wealthy family with strong connections to the Rumelian branch of the Bayrami-Malāmis. His earliest guide was his

⁴⁰² His name appears as Oğlanlar seyhi (shaykh of the youth), or Olanlar Seyhi (shaykh of those who have attained) in various sources. I have opted to use the previous one. For more information on this figure see MM, 90-113; "Ibrahim Efendi, Olanlar Seyhi" TDVIA (Nihat Azamat); "Ibrahim Efendi, Olanlar Şeyhi" DBIA (Ekrem Işın); Şeyhi, *Vekayi'ul Fuzalā*, I, 553; Uşşākizāde, *Zeyl-i Sakāyik*, 545; *Osmanlı Müellifleri* I, 26-7; Vassaf, *Sefine* II, 515; Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 297-9; Tümer, *Hediyye*, 603-7; F. A. Tansel, "Olanlar Şeyhi Ibrahim Efendi ve Devriyesi," *AÜİFD* 17 (1969), 187-99; Bilal Kemikli, "Bayrami-Malāmi Şair: Oğlan Şeyhi Ibrahim Efendi," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 7(2002): 239-66; Ayşe Asude Soysal, "XVII. Yüzyılda Bir Bayrami-Malāmi Kutbu: Oğlan(lar) Seyh(i) Ibrahim Efendi" (PhD diss., Hacettepe University, 2005). Ibrahim Efendi is also known as "Oghlanlar Seyhi" (shaykh of young boys) because there were many young boys among his disciples. Another reading of this title is *Olanlar seyhi*, meaning the shaykh of those who have attained.

⁴⁰³ The distinction between the attitudes of Sarı Abdullah and Ibrahim Efendi exhibits two different strands of Bayrami-Malāmi representation during the seventeenth century. It is impossible to see, for instance, any traces of the concept of *malāmat* in Ibrahim Efendi's writings in the manner Sarı Abdullah interpreted it. Unlike the latter, Ibrahim Efendi seems to have believed that his mystical vision would stay at odds with the shari'a until a complete transformation took place. Thus he makes use of dissimulation rather than trying to prove religious acceptability of his way of life. Due this difference in attitude and language, these two different strands did not always get along well. For instance, *Hediyye* reports a very interesting episode where Ibrahim Efendi chastises Sarı Abdullah for talking too long about things that do not mean much. "In a gathering where Aksarayı Oğlan Shaykh was present, Abdullah Efendi was telling stories regarding unveilings and miraculous deeds of some ecstasies (*majādhīb*). The former, as usual in his noble manners, was concentrated in his own thoughts and was sitting silently. Aksarayı was very wise (*ʿārif*) and elegant (*zarīf*). (However) he sniped at Abdullah Efendi and said: "What kind of a dull idiot (*abhal-i ghabī*) you are! In the presence of the *qutb*, you keep us busy us with nonsense sayings of some lunatics rather than trying to get him to speak and benefit all of us." (Tümer, *Hediyye*, 455)

⁴⁰⁴ See the discussion regarding the birthplace of Ibrahim Efendi in Soysal, 63-5. She concludes that he was born in Eğridere which might indicate a town in the vicinity of Uskup, or another one around Edirne.

grandfather, Tab Tab Ali Shah, who was an adherent of Ahmed Sarban. Following the latter's death, Tab Tab Ali Şah seems to have pledged allegiance to Vizeli Aleddin, and then to Gazanfer Dede.⁴⁰⁵ In the *Sohbetname*, Ibrahim Efendi mentions that Gazanfer Dede had told his father that his son would be his spiritual re-presentation.⁴⁰⁶

After losing his father at a young age, Ibrahim decided that he was not interested in managing the family wealth as the only son. Instead he came to Istanbul in search of mystical training. He was advised by a friend to go to the Khalwati convent directed by Hakikizade Osman (d.1037/1627)⁴⁰⁷ under whose supervision Ibrahim was trained on the Khalwati way for seven years.

Once he received the authorization, Ibrahim Efendi was appointed to lead a convent in Istanbul. This convent came to be known as the “*Oğlanlar tekkesi*”⁴⁰⁸ and attracted many visitors from the upper class. Some sources indicate that people had to wait in queues to see the shaykh and that the rich had surrounded the *tekke* to the extent that the poor could not find a way to get in.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁵ Soysal, 62.

⁴⁰⁶ *Sohbetname* *Sohbetname*, 40a; Soysal, 62.

⁴⁰⁷ Hakikizade Osman Efendi was a Khalwati shaykh located at the convent in Eğrikapı in Istanbul. He had been a disciple of the Khalwati shaykh Seyyid Nizam, mentioned before as the author of *Camiul-Avarif*. For more information on Hakikizade see *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, I, 58-9; Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliya* II, 492-3; Soysal, 72-6. According to Gölpınarlı, Hakikizade Osman was likely the son of Hakiki Osman Efendi, the latter being the author of the Bayrami-Malāmi treatise titled *Irshadname* as mentioned before. He believes that identities of the father and the son are mixed together in most sources. See *MM*, 211. According to Soysal, on the other hand, there is no confusion, but there is only one Osman Efendi, who happens to be a Bayrami-Malāmi at heart, appearing to be a Khalwati on the surface. She believes this is why Ibrahim Efendi adhered to him, and it was Osman Efendi who introduced him to Lāmekāni. (See Soysal, 74-6). Soysal's proposition is possible, however, it does not conform well with the fact that Ibrahim Efendi remembers Osman Efendi as a Khalwati shaykh only. There is no indication in Ibrahim Efendi's writings regarding Osman Efendi's secretive Malāmi identity.

⁴⁰⁸ “*Oğlanlar Tekkesi*” *DBIA* (M. Baha Tanman). *Tekke* of young boys; presumably most attenders were young boys. The beauty of these boys are reminisced in a surprising context by Evliya Çelebi, the famous Ottoman traveler of the time. He actually compares the beauty of male slaves he encounters in Kefe to the young boys in Ibrahim Efendi's lodge. (Soysal, 69)

⁴⁰⁹ Seyhi I, 553. Khalwati author Muhammad Nazmi is fierce against Bayrami-Malāmis, whom he calls Idrisi. He, however, remembers Oghlan Shaykh Ibrahim with much respect and calls him the second Ibn 'Arabi of the time. He also notes the crowd around the *tekke*. (Tümer, *Hediyye*, 604-5)

During the time that he spent as the shaykh of this convent, Ibrahim Efendi came under suspicion once when Murad IV decided to follow the convent more closely. By that time, the sultan, known for his hot temper, had already executed several Sufi shaykhs reportedly having been bothered by the amount of attention they received from the common folk. Being aware of the danger, Ibrahim Efendi took refuge in the Jalwati shaykh Hudai's convent in Uskudar. After hiding himself there for a while until the danger passed, Ibrahim Efendi returned to his own convent having received from Hudai a Jalwati headdress and a cloak.⁴¹⁰

Throughout his life, Ibrahim Efendi kept close contacts with various Bayrami-Malāmi figures. He specifically mentions to have benefited immensely from Huseyin Lamekani whom he had met not long after arriving in Istanbul. He also notes meeting Idris Muhtefi around the age of fifteen.⁴¹¹ The subsequent Melami *pīrs* are also mentioned in his poetry.⁴¹² In his famous *qasida* titled *Dil-i Dana*, he ascribes himself to the Bayrami-Malāmi genealogy without mentioning any of his Khalwati associations.⁴¹³

For understanding Ibrahim Efendi's worldview, the *Sohbetname* is a uniquely valuable source. Here Ibrahim Efendi presents himself as an inheritor of his grandfather's heritage, and indicates that his dedication to the Khalwatiyya is just on the surface.⁴¹⁴ We also understand that Ibrahim Efendi made a distinction between his close and loyal adherents with whom he felt free to share this family heritage versus those who were trained based on the concepts of the Khalwatiyya. This might have been a practice

⁴¹⁰ See Tümer, *Hediye*, 605. For information regarding the Sufi shaykhs executed by Murad IV see Yilmaz, 446-8.

⁴¹¹ *MM*, 94.

⁴¹² For examples of Ibrahim Efendi's referrals to successors of Idris, namely Kabayi and Beşir Ağa, see *MM*, 93-4.

⁴¹³ *MM*, 91.

⁴¹⁴ *Sohbetname*, 22b.

Ibrahim Efendi picked up early from his father, since regarding an individual who was a admirer of his father, he notes that there was this person who frequented his father's circle. He would come and go, he says, and yet was not aware of the reality of the matter.

Ibrahim Efendi saw his writings to be aligned with those of Rumi and Ibn 'Arabi, and expected to be read in accordance with their perspectives. We also understand from the *Sohbetname* that Ibrahim Efendi saw himself among the group of people that he defined as *ahl-i wahdat* or *wahdatis*, people who believe in a specific vision of mystical oneness. He describes his affiliations in the *Sohbetname* in this manner: "We are not Khalwatis, Jalwatis, Kadiris, or Mawlawis; rather we are the *wahdatis* who belong with the folk of love (*arbāb-i muhabbat*). For the *wahdati*, the intention from] the rituals and practices of all paths is but summoning love (*jalb-i muhabbat*)."⁴¹⁵ These people of oneness, for him, were a higher category of people who were distinctly superior to Sufis. Sufis for him were *ahl-i barzakh*, people who live in-between without having accomplished to attain the truth in its fullness.

In the *Sohbetname*, Ibrahim Efendi makes use of various Hurufi concepts, and refers to Fazlallah and Nesimi in a couple of occasions. At times he quotes verses from their poetry in order to explain his point of view. In one particular statement, he acknowledges Fazlallah as the master of esoteric interpretation, i.e. *sahib-i ta'wil*, the most common epithet used for the latter in Hurufi literature.⁴¹⁶ Ibrahim Efendi also seems to have been in support of esoteric interpretations with regards to the Islamic rituals,⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ *Sohbetname*, 14b.

⁴¹⁶ See Bashir, "Deciphering the Cosmos," 173.

⁴¹⁷ Whether Hurufi understanding of *ta'wil* should be expanded to the Islamic rituals was a contentious issue among Hurufis themselves. Fazlallah seems to have been a man of asceticism, spending much time in solitude and prayer. Some followers, however, after his death indicated that having reached the gnostic knowledge (*ma'rifa*) about themselves, they had already attained heaven and prescriptions of the shari'a were no longer applicable to them. When questioned on this, however, 'Ali al-'Āla is reported to have

but also seems to have underlined that such ideas needed to be concealed at present for circumspection. “The author of the *Javidanname*, (Fazlallah), due to the necessities of his time, employed interpretation (*ta’wīl*) upon the shari‘a. As of now, this level is not needed. It is rather necessary to veil the meanings before the seekers. In another time (in the future), however, due to the necessities of prophecy and calling (*da’wa*), the need for interpretation (*ta’wīl*) will reoccur.”⁴¹⁸

The need to conceal the teaching is a recurrent theme in the *Sohbetname*. His disciple Sunullah Gaybi notes that Ibrahim Efendi advised them to talk about the oneness of being (*wahdat*) only by way of quoting from the subsequent masters. This way, they could not be accused of unbelief since they only quoted someone else’s words.⁴¹⁹ In the *Biatname*, Sunullah Gaybi explains the extent of circumspection Ibrahim Efendi employed through an episode.

One the great of shaykhs of the time was boasting to have attained 400 hundred admirers who were aware of Ibrahim Efendi’s secret. Upon hearing this Ibrahim Efendi selected four among them and put them through examination. By the end, he said: “Go away all of you, none of you deserve to be in our service and none of you is eligible for our companionship. If I revealed a little bit from the secret of the *awliyā’* to you, you would telltale right away and would come up with a fatwa for our execution before anyone else.” He accepted none of them as dervishes.⁴²⁰

indicated the necessity of the daily Muslim prayer, although his take on them is not quite the norm. “Love consists in this, that one should fulfill the prostration of submission to every hair of the face, and the eyebrow, and eyelash, and glance of the beloved. Paradise is conformable to prayer.” Many adherents in different geological locations, however, seem to have disregarded outer forms of religion. (For a more detailed discussion, see Browne, “Some Notes,” 72-4; Bashir, “Deciphering the Cosmos,” 180-1.)

⁴¹⁸ *Sohbetname*, 11b. Ibrahim Efendi also makes referrals to the engraftment of divinity within the human body, which is a specifically Ḥurūfī point of reference. “Just as the whole human body is a model for the name of God, the name also appears in certain limbs. In this regard, if you put your hand in ink and then put it on a piece of white sheet, engraving of the name of God will appear.” (*Sohbetname*, 2b.)

⁴¹⁹ *Sohbetname*, 7b.

⁴²⁰ *Biatname*, 12b.

In the *Sohbetname*, it is also possible to detect Ibrahim Efendi's negative reaction against the Ottoman rule, which forced him to employ these methods of dissimulation.

For him, the Ottomans were utterly offensive against the saints:

In a gathering, the Grand Vizier (*wakīl-i saltanat*) was praised. Oğlan Shaykh Ibrahim Efendi shrewdly commented: "The (rightful) vizier or the ruler (*padişah*) is the one who provides comfort for the *threes*, the *sevens*, and the *forties*, and the men of the unseen."⁴²¹ He tries to win the hearts of the people of the truth so that his business goes smoothly. However, these (the Ottomans) are their absolute enemies. This is why, Pir Ali Aksarāyi used to say in his prayer: "O the Pure One (*Zāt-i Pāk*), do not let *padişahs*' feet get off the stirrup,⁴²² and do not let ministers have any spare moment; so that the people of the truth can feel comfortable and keep busy with their own business (*kendi ālemlerinde olalar*)."⁴²³

In such difficult circumstances, Ibrahim Efendi's most important disciple who drew upon his Bayrami-Malāmi teaching was Sunullah Gaybi (d.1072/1661 or 1087/1676).⁴²⁴ Gaybi was originally from the west-Anatolian city of Kütahya, and was also from a family that was familiar with the Bayrami-Malāmiyya. In his writings, he reports that his grandfather had become attached to the Order after being trained vigorously in various other Sufi orders. His father, on the other hand, was a local judge (mufti), and had arrived at the path of mystical oneness (*wahdat*) after serving various Sufi shaykhs for twenty years. Regarding both of these figures, Gaybi reiterates the idea that their mystical search was not satisfied by the Sufi shaykhs that they adhered, which pushed them towards searching for the truth further until finally they were able to attain the teachings of Bayrami-Malāmis.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ *Ücler, yediler, kırklar* and *rijāl-i ghayb*- all refer to the hierarchy of the saints.

⁴²² He is trying to say, "let them be on their horses all the time." *Padişahs* would be on their horses at the time of war paying relatively less attention to the internal matters of the Empire.

⁴²³ *Sohbetname*, 31a.

⁴²⁴ "Sun'ullah Gaybī" *TDVİA* (Bilal Kemikli); *MM*, 114-22; Köprülü, *İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 347-8; *SE*, II, 493-502; *Osmanlı Muellifleri I*, 136; Abdurrahman Doğan, *Kütahyalı Sunullah Gaybi*, Istanbul, 2001; Bilal Kemikli (ed), *Sunullah-i Gaybi Divānı*, Istanbul, 2000; Gölpınarlı, *Tasavvuf Siiri Antolojisi*, 160-73..

Gaybi seems to have received a decent education himself, quite possibly had knowledge of Arabic and Persian. After completing his studies, he was sent to Istanbul by his father who seems to have known Ibrahim Efendi personally. Sunullah stayed in Ibrahim Efendi's convent for around six years between 1059-1065 and 1649-1655, documenting some of the teachings he received during this time in the *Sohbetname*. Accordingly it is clear that he was among Ibrahim Efendi's most intimate disciples.⁴²⁶

When Ibrahim Efendi died, Sunullah Gaybi went back to his hometown and spent the rest of his life there. He seems to have led a monastic lifestyle and there are no reports regarding any disciples he left behind. He was, however, very vocal about explaining his worldview through various treatises, including *Biatname*, *Ruhu'l-Hakika*, and *Risale-i Halvetiyye ve Bayramiyye*. Gaybi was also a good poet putting forth his mystical vision in simple daily Turkish. His *Keşfu'l-Ġitā* (*Revealing the Hidden*) should be specifically mentioned as a small presentation of his core beliefs.

In *Ruh'ul-Hakika*, Sunullah Gaybi gives a description of the path he follows:

“Our path is established on love (*muhabbet*), conversation (*sohbet*), and gnosis (*ma'rifet*). Practices that are common in other orders, i.e. strenuous mortification, bodily struggle, mystical dance (*deverān*), and continual repetition of God's names (*vird* and *dhikr*) principally do not exist. As (it is accepted that) the goal from all works is gnosis (*ma'rifa*), for us, actions that do not lead to gnosis are considered to be futile.”⁴²⁷

Both Ibrahim Efendi and Sunullah Gaybi, although making constant remarks regarding the need for dissimulation, could be quite explicit about the worldview they held. Gölpınarlı notes how remarkable it is that Ibrahim Efendi was so blatant in his poetry despite the dangerous milieu of the time. In one verse, for instance, Ibrahim

⁴²⁶ *Biatname* quotes Ibrahim Efendi saying “We have been beating the drum of *wahdat* for forty years in Istanbul, and have been able to make it heard to only one person.” (*Biatname*, 12b) This one person was quite likely Sunullah Gaybi.

⁴²⁷ *Rūh'ul-Hakika*, 18a.

Efendi declares: “What appears to you to be the universe / Is in reality none other than God / God is one I swear / Do not think there is more than one.”⁴²⁸ Sunullah Gaybi, on the other hand, declares: “All things is in fact one being, God is the essence of all things / It is all He that we see, nothing exists other than Him.”⁴²⁹ In the same vein with Ibrahim Efendi, he talks about the essential oneness surrounding the universe, the importance of the *awliyā*’ who are the final and perfect products of this existence, and the importance of finding and adhering to the one true saint of the time. He also features some of the mystically interpreted versions of the beliefs regarding the hereafter. Their writings will be examined more closely in the fifth chapter.

End of an Era (Execution of Sütçü Beşir Ağa)

Muhammad Nazmi in his *Hediyyetu’l-Ihvān* describes how the public had formed two conflicting opinions regarding the Bayrami-Malāmiyya in Istanbul in the seventeenth century. He notes that he is not quite sure which one to follow, because such a knowledgeable person as Abdullah Bosnavi belong to the fold of Bayrami-Malāmis and then puts forth the other side of the coin:

“I have heard such things from the ignorant beginners among Idrisis (referring to Idris Muhtefi) that these were not much different from the sayings of the extremists of Shi‘ite heretics (*rawāfiḍ*). I have, however, also witnessed among them many people who abide by the shari‘a and are the loci of divine knowledge. It is known that Hamzavis and Idrīsīs do not reside in convents, choose to be hidden, and their shaykhs have been executed. Because of these, they have been subjects of various gossips, and been attributed with various acts and sayings, most of which are slanders and lies. Most people assume that they have gone completely

⁴²⁸ Gölpınarlı, *Türk Tasavvuf Şiiri Antolojisi*, 160.

⁴²⁹ *MM*, 116. These are the beginning lines to his famous kaside, *Keşfü’l-Ghitā*.

astray. I have found in my own opinion that the good among them are real good, and the bad among them are real bad.”⁴³⁰

As this passage indicates, although several figures played important roles in forming a positive image for the Order, the negative reactions continued to exist in Istanbul. The reaction against the Hamzavis can be found most concretely in a treatise written around 1023/1614 by a Mehmed Amiki in order to refute Hamzavi teachings.⁴³¹ The writer seems to have been a Sufi shaykh agitated by the Hamzavi influence among his prospective disciples. He describes the reason for writing the treatise as coming into contact with a soldier (*sipahi*) who admitted to having ties with the Hamzavis. He explains that he felt sorry for this uneducated simple soldier who like many others had fallen under the spell of Hamzavi teachings. In the treatise, he examines and falsifies Hamzavi teachings, and describes them as a group of people that need to be shunned since their teachings are completely incompatible with Islam.

It must be due to similar kinds of accusations that Idris's successor, Hacı Bayram Kabayi (d.1036/1626),⁴³² followed an exceptionally cautious way. Kabayi was a freed-slave belonging to the Georgian origin. It was through his owner Ibrahim Çavuş that he had joined the order. Kabayi's real name was Keyvan, and was apparently given the epithet "Hacı Bayram" in the memory of the founder of Bayramiyya. His other epithet Kabayi, on the other hand, pointed to his profession as the salesperson of *kaba*, a piece of clothing worn over the shirt like a robe. During the years he was accepted as the *pîr* of the Order, Kabayi continued to work as a regular merchant in his shop. He kept a low

⁴³⁰ Türier, 454-5.

⁴³¹ Mehmed Amiki, "Risāle-i Beyān-i Hamzaviyye," in *Melāmet Risāleleri: Bayramī Melāmiliği'ne Dair*, ed. Abdurrezzak Tek (Bursa: Emin Yayınları, 2007), 423-39.

⁴³² *MM*, 156; Lalizade, 49-50; Mustakimzade, 81b-82a.

profile and restricted his meetings to only a few people. Lalizade reports that Kabayi would not accept any disciples at all, and that Bayrami shaykh Bezcizade Efendi⁴³³ acted as his deputy. According to Lalizade, some of the most reliable adherents would occasionally bring a limited number of trustworthy seekers to meet with the latter. Bezcizade looked into their hearts secretly and let them taste the wine of divine love.⁴³⁴

Things change during the time of Kabayi's successor, Beşir Ağa (ex.1073/1662)⁴³⁵ who exhibited quite a different approach. Beşir Ağa was originally from Albania, and had come to Istanbul as a young man having been recruited among *Bostancıs*, a military class that was responsible for taking care of the palaces in Istanbul.⁴³⁶ As a young man, he searched for a spiritual guide and came to know a barber who was one of the guides (*rehber*) of Idris.⁴³⁷ Through this barber's guidance, he was initiated into the order and became aware of the teachings. When Idrīs died, Beşir Ağa retired from his job and took up residence close to Kabayi's home. Having completely dedicated himself to the latter's service, Beşir Ağa accompanied Kabāyi on his way to his shop every morning, and then back to his home at night. Through this, he came to share intimate moments with Kabayi. During one of these moments, Kabayi mentioned leaving the Order to his care. A short while after this conversation, Kabayi died and Beşir Ağa started witnessing trees bowing down before him, which indicated to him that he was indeed the new *quṭb*. At the time, Beşir Ağa must have been in his fifties. Blessed with a

⁴³³ According to Gölpinarlı, this Bezcizade was different from the one who was an adherent of Idris Muhtefi.

⁴³⁴ Lalizade. 49.

⁴³⁵ On Beşir Ağa see *MM*, 158-60; *ZM*, 304-6; Lalizade, 53-5; Mustakimzade, 82b-89a.

⁴³⁶ Pakalin, "Bostancı" I, 239.

⁴³⁷ The story is told in length in Mustakimzade, 83a-85b

long life, he was able to lead Melamis for about 36 years until his execution in his nineties.

It seems that Besir Aga was an energetic man who insisted on meeting with all his admirers himself. Consequently his residence was filled with visitors who came to see him.⁴³⁸ Lalizade attributes Beşir Ağa's execution to this popularity and his ties with the Albanian folk who were of questionable pedigree (namely Hurufis and Bektashis).⁴³⁹ He presents a letter written by Beşir Ağa to one of his distanced disciples to prove that Beşir Ağa was indeed compliant with the shari'a and insisted that his followers do the same. In this letter, Besir Aga urges his followers to comply with the shari'a in their speech and action, stay away from the forbidden foods, and to not talk about the problematic parts of their teachings, specifically about the cycle of existence (*devr*).⁴⁴⁰ In a quick note, he also asks them to not bow down before each other to exhibit modesty, but follow the *shar'i* model to greet each other, i.e. shaking each other's hands (*muşāfaha*).

This letter is an indication that Beşir Ağa indeed made an effort to keep up with the appearances of the *shar'i* behavior. However his deep ties with the questionable pedigree of the Bayrami-Malāmiyya, the Bektashiyya and the Hurufiyya seem to have been enough to put him in a dangerous spot. As in the case of other Bayrami-Malāmi executions, there might have been accusations against him for being an uneducated man (*ummi*) having excessive influence on the simple-minded folk.

It seems that *shaykh al-islām* of the time, Sunizade Seyyid Mehmet Emin Efendi (d. 1076/1665),⁴⁴¹ was specifically agitated by his following. It was not long after his

⁴³⁸ See Mustakimzade 88b-89a.

⁴³⁹ Lalizade, 54.

⁴⁴⁰ *Devr* (circle of life) will be discussed in chapter 5. This letter can be found in Lalizade, 51-2.

⁴⁴¹ See "Seyyid Mehmed Emin Efendi" *TDVİA* (Tahsin Özcan).

appointment to this post that Sunizade proceeded to issue a fatwa for Beşir Ağa's execution. The following day after the killing, on the other hand, when forty men protested against what happened to Besir Aga, the *shaykh al-islām* made sure that these forty men are also killed.⁴⁴² According to Lalizade, Sunizade was working in collaboration with the grand vizier of the time, Köprülü Fazıl Ahmet Pasha (r.1661-76) and the two had taken action unbeknownst to Sultan Mehmed IV (r.1648-87) who was away from Istanbul on an expedition. He also adds that some of the 'ulama' criticized Sunizade for killing that many men without proper investigation. Unable to come up with enough proof for their blasphemy, Sunizade was removed from his post after a short while.⁴⁴³

After Beşir Ağa's death, Bayrami-Malāmis never quite regained their previous position.⁴⁴⁴ His death marks the end of the medieval allure that this order was able to retain through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The following *quṭbs*, Seyyid Mehmed Hashim of Bursa (d. 1088/1677)⁴⁴⁵ and Paşmakçızade Seyyid Ali (d. 1124/1712)⁴⁴⁶, were careful to operate under a heavy curtain of secrecy and did not show much interest in expanding the order. It is quite interesting that the heads of the Order from this point on present quite a different profile than the previous ones. Pasmakçızade, for instance, was from a well-respected family and was closely tied to the madrasa milieu. He was educated in the madrasa and held positions fitting to this career (*mudarris*, *kadi*). He even climbed up to the highest position possible at the time

⁴⁴²MM, 159.

⁴⁴³ Lalizade, 55. Sun'i-zade ends up keeping the office for less than a year. According to some sources of the time, Mehmed Emin Efendi was a frivolous man who could not represent the dignity of his status as a *shaykh al-islām*. This is why he was dismissed from the office after only 10 months.

⁴⁴⁴ See the discussion regarding the situation after Besir Aga's death in Mustakimzade, 89a. Also see Rüya Kılıç, "Bir Tarikatin Gizli Direnişi," *Tasavvuf* 10 (2003): 52-72.

⁴⁴⁵ Lalizade, 56; Mustakimzade, 89b; Yilmaz, 355.

⁴⁴⁶ "Paşmakçızade Ali Efendi" *TDVİA* (Mehmet İpşirli).

functioning as a *shaykh al-islām* several times between 1704 and 1712. During the time, although he was recognized as the *quṭb* by the circle of Bayrami-Malāmis, Pasmakçızade refused to meet with the followers.⁴⁴⁷

During the eighteenth century, although Lalizade weeps for the lost days of glory and not being aware of the current *quṭb*, various sources provide a constant *silsila* until the modern times. During the lifetime of Lalizade, in fact, Melamis were witnessing a surge in their influence on the palace. During the Tulip period (1718-30), many high officials and intellectuals considered themselves Melamis and most of these men were connected to Lalizade.⁴⁴⁸

In the following century, another surge of Melamiyye, although nurtured from another *silsila* and not supported by Bayrami-Malāmis, was established under the charismatic persona of Seyyid Muhammed Nur'ul-Arabi (1813-87).⁴⁴⁹ Muhammed Nur'ul-Arabi was of Arab descent (born in Egypt, originally from a Sufi family in Jerusalem). After receiving some education and establishing ties with several Sufi orders (the most important of which was Naqshbandiyya), Nur'ul-'Arabi ended up locating himself in the Balkans and was influenced by the Melami aura in the area. Thanks to his considerable training in the exoteric as well as the esoteric, he was able to establish himself as an influential shaykh with ties to the governing and literary class in Istanbul. Nur'ul-'Arabi, nevertheless showed deep interest in the doctrine of divine unity and wrote under the influence of Ibn 'Arabi. He also admired Shaykh Bedreddin and wrote a

⁴⁴⁷ Lalizade in the manuscript version; Tek, 146.

⁴⁴⁸ For discussions of Malāmi influence on the palace at the time, see "Melamilik" *DBIA* (Ekrem Işın); Calis, 251.

⁴⁴⁹ On this order known as the third wave of Malamatiyya in Turkish Sufi literature, see *MM*, 230-337. The third form of Malāmatiyya was historically and ideologically connected to the second one, although not fully supported by it. According to Golpinarli, Muhammad Nur tried to be admitted by the Malāmi shaykh of the time, Sayyid Abdulkadir Efendi, but the latter did not show much regard to him. (*MM*, 239)

commentary on his *Waridat*.⁴⁵⁰ This wave of the Melamiyya, was able to attract considerable following from among the elite class of Ottoman gentlemen and many men of literary caliber identified themselves as Melamis in the wake of the establishment of modern Turkey.⁴⁵¹

Conclusion

This chapter tells the story of transformation within the Bayrami-Malāmi circles during the seventeenth century. At the time, several cultured representatives of the order were able to establish a strong basis within the elite audiences in Istanbul. During the course of this development, teachings of the order were reconstructed and a new image was put forward. Messianism of the former times was suppressed to a large extent and other aspects of the teaching gained prominence. As the order became more and more affiliated with the elite, the reactionary mode lost its effectiveness as well.

It is in this latter period that almost all of the Bayrami-Malāmi sources we have today were authored. These exhibit two different approaches. The first chooses to interpret Bayrami-Malāmi teachings in new ways so as not to offend the orthodox. A more respectable and accommodating language is employed by way of making use of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings. Figures such as Sarı Abdullah played significant roles in this stage, on the one hand providing the group with a positive imagery, on the other hand helping it gain new adherents among the elite of Istanbul.

⁴⁵⁰ For a discussion of Nur’ul-Arabi’s ideas, see Gölpınarlı, 243-69.

⁴⁵¹ For some observations on the Malāmi gatherings in modern Turkey, see Holbrook, “Ibn Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions-Part two,” *Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society Journal*, 15-6.

Others, as exemplified by Ibrahim Efendi, seem to have revealed some of the teachings in a way that could be tolerated, while talking about more intimate issues only within secret meetings. The need for dissimulation is deeply felt in his expositions in the *Sohbetname*. To this end, some figures among the Bayrami-Malāmiyya followed a secretive course by adopting two different identities at the same time. Association with various Sufi orders and adhering to popular Sufi shaykhs of the time were among the ways through which Bayrami-Malāmis tried to dispel the suspicion hanging over their lives. Ibrahim Efendi's expositions in the *Sohbetname* portray a fascinating glimpse of the extent of pressure he felt to make use of two different forms of language in his daily gatherings at the convent and the secret meetings with his foremost disciples.

During the following century, it was Sarı Abdullah's visionary that became more popular and widespread. During this time, the title "Malāmi" outweighed the Bayrami title, and the Malāmis came to be understood as a "supra-order" that offered something beyond the normal Ottoman *tarikāt* initiation.⁴⁵² It was said that the Malāmi began where the other *tarikats* left off, a group comprised of those who had completed whatever course of progress was offered elsewhere. In the same way with Sarı Abdullah, many figures of wealth and education were attracted to the order with deep feelings of awe without seeing any discrepancy between their dedication to Bayrami-Malāmiyya and orthodox teachings of Islam.

⁴⁵² Holbrook, "Ibn Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions."

Chapter 5. Teachings: God, Cosmos, and the Awliyā'

It is not quite possible to attest that Bayrami-Malāmis had one specific belief system in which each member was asked to believe. As much as we can gather from the written material, there is fluidity, at times even contrast, between various sets of beliefs. Somehow these differences were tolerated within the group, as long as there was an agreement on the identity of the *pīr*. In this chapter, I will try to provide insight into some of the most important concepts that appear in writings belonging to the Bayrami-Malāmi tradition. I will make translations from the original texts, and at times will point out how another Bayrami-Malāmi author viewed the discussion in a different way.

The basic sources used in this chapter in chronological order are, Askeri's *Mir'atu'l-'ishk*, Hakiki's *Irshadname*, Sarı Abdullah's *Semerat*, and Ibrahim Efendi's *Sohbetname*. Each of these sources tries to substantiate the Bayrami-Malāmi worldview by relying on various writings from the Sufi heritage. In this vast heritage, they pick and choose the ones that they understand to be most fitting for the Bayrami-Malāmi worldview.

Askeri, for instance, explains how the Order felt the need to establish a reconnection with the esteemed writers of the Sufi tradition in the aftermath of Ismail Maşuki's execution. Accordingly, during the bleak days when Pir Ali's adherents had to be very careful, he heard his shaykh Ahmed Edirnevi complain about the situation and mention a Persian book that could help them explain their point of view:

... (Nowadays) states of masters of love have become unheard of, the order of the time has become distraught, secrets of the saints have become concealed under the veil of *hijab*, those with eyes to see have become devoid of light, and everybody remains veiled and abandoned. A gnostic among the Persian masters have written a delightful book containing sayings of the saints (*awliyā'*), secrets of the pure ones, and all kinds of (spiritual) states. We have heard about it, but we could not see it with our own eyes.⁴⁵³

Upon hearing this, Askeri thought that the book Ahmed Edirnevi was talking about could be Muhammad Parsa's (d. 822/1419) *Fasl al-Khitab* (*The Decisive Speech*),⁴⁵⁴ which he was familiar with thanks to the collection of Sufi books left behind by his father. During one of the meetings with Ahmed Edirnevi, Askeri let him know about the book and read parts of it in his presence. After Edirnevi approved the value of the source, Askeri decided to compile a book in which he would translate parts of *Fasl al-Khitab*, and also let people know about his own experiences in the gatherings of masters of love (*arbāb-i 'ishk*), in "an age when people were fooled by liars who presented themselves as Sufi masters."⁴⁵⁵ Askeri also makes use of several other Sufi works including Hujwiri's *Kashf al-Mahjub*, Shabustari's *Gulshan-i Raz*, and Rumi's *Mathnawi*.

The second source, *Irshadname*, is more like a handbook that is concise and to the point. It might be one of the few sources that reflect the oral tradition within the order in a rather simple form. It is therefore significant that it is woven with the Bayrami-Malāmi imagery regarding the *awliyā'*, loyalty to 'Ali, and the dualistic order of the universe. The author also quotes from the poet Hafiz extensively to illustrate his point in verses.

⁴⁵³ MI, 17.

⁴⁵⁴ *Fasl al-Khitab* was written by the Naqshabandi shaykh Muhammad Parsa (d. 822/1419). It became a handbook of Sufism in various parts of the Islamic lands, including the Ottoman realms. DeDeweese explains that it was "of pivotal importance in shaping and refining the Central Asian consensus on the notion of the *walī*." See "Wali, In Central Asia" EI² (D. DeWeese). It is quite possible that this is why Askeri was attracted to the book. Muhammad Parsa seems to have adhered to a similar vision of mystical monism as well. It is also significant that Muhammad Parsa suggested Malāmati origins for his own path of Naqshbandiyya in this book. See "Malamatiyya" EI² (H. Algar).

⁴⁵⁵ MI, 20.

Sari Abdullah's *Semerat*, on the other hand, includes long quotes from Najm ad-Din Razi's commentary of the Qur'an.⁴⁵⁶ Some of the core concepts (for instance how to understand the spirit) are explained by quoting at length from this text. Sari Abdullah, indeed was quite knowledgeable on the writings of Ibn 'Arabi as well, but the latter rarely makes an appearance in the *Semerat*. Quotes from various Persian Sufi mystics, on the other hand, are plenty; these include verses from 'Attar, Rumi, and Shabustari's *Gulshan-i Raz*.

The other source, *Sohbetname*, belongs to a different genre; it is a collection of Ibrahim Efendi's sporadic sayings, and therefore it is more difficult to assess its background. Ibrahim Efendi had in fact forbidden his disciples from studying Sufi books, because he did not see much benefit in doing so. He, however, seems to have been quite knowledgeable with regard to the Sufi writings. He makes referrals to various early Sufi figures including Junayd (d. 297/910), Bayazid Bistami (d. 261/ 874-5), and Hallaj (d. 309/ 922), speaks highly of Iraqi's *Lamaat*, and quotes from Ibn 'Arabi and Rumi at times. His overall vision regarding the divinity, cosmology, and eschatology, on the other hand, seems to have been rooted in the writings of Aziz Nasafi (d. ca. 1300), a well-known Sufi author that he does not openly refer. The specific vocabulary and imagery within the *Sohbetname*, however, smoothly correspond with those of Aziz Nasafi. Thus *Sohbetname*, a sporadic collection of sayings without a context to weave them together, becomes more accessible once we study it through the help Aziz Nasafi's writings. It is

⁴⁵⁶ Najm ad-Din Daya (d.1256), author of *Mirsad al-'Ibad*, is known to have penned an Arabic commentary on the Qur'an entitled *Bahr al-Haqa'iq wa-l-Ma'ani fi Tafsir al-Sab' al-Matani*, also known as *'Ayn al-Hayat* and *al-Ta'wilat al-Najmiyya*, which survives in many manuscripts but no published edition. See "Dāya, Najm-al-Din Abu Bakr 'Abd-allah" *Elr* (Mohammed-Amin Riahi).

through the help of these writings that I try to put forth Ibrahim Efendi's overall vision of cosmic monism in the next section.

I. Body and Spirit, Cosmos and God

Oğlanlar Seyhi Ibrahim Efendi saw himself among the group of people that he defined as *ahl-i wahdat* or *wahdatīs*, people who believe in a specific vision of mystical oneness. These people of oneness, for him, were a distinct category of people who were superior to Sufis. Sufis for him were *ahl-i barzakh*, people who live in-between without having accomplished to attain the truth in its fullness.

In the same manner, the thirteenth century Sufi author 'Aziz Nasafi distinguished four kinds of discourses regarding the relationship between God and the existence during his time. These discourses belonged to the people of the holy law ('ulama'), the philosophers (the people of *hikmat*), the Sufis, and fourthly, as he frequently distinguishes from the latter, the people of Oneness.⁴⁵⁷ The last one is understood in the same vein that Ibrahim Efendi understood himself vis-à-vis the Sufis. For Aziz Nasafi, "*ahl-i wahdat* designates an elite, as distinguished from the more common folk who have

⁴⁵⁷ Nasafi uses different classifications in his treatises and makes use of different concepts as he elaborates on these groups. In his *Maqsad-i Aqsā*, he elaborates on the distinction between the people of the Oneness and Sufis and from the points he makes one can gain the insight that Sufis are mostly associated with the people of holy law. On the other hand, the People of Oneness is described to be closer to the positions of the philosophers. In another treatise of his, *Zubdat al-Haqa'iq*, the classification is made between three groups: people of the holy law, philosophers, and the people of Oneness. Thus the people of Oneness are treated as providing a distinct position while for the Sufis, he comments at one point: "The discourses of the Sufis are mixed with some of those of the people of the holy law, the philosophers, and the people of Oneness." L. Ridgeon, *Persian Metaphysics and Mysticism: Selected Treatises of 'Aziz Nasafi* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press: 2002), 179.

not reached the highest state of mystical oneness”. Similarly Nasafi’s *ahl-i tasawwuf* (Sufis) or *mashayih-i tarikat* (shaykhs of Sufi orders) are not identical with the *ahl-i wahdat*; they rather play the role of the middle-of-the-roaders.”⁴⁵⁸ Although Nasafi refrains from admitting to having belonged to the last group (most likely for the fear of being accused of infidelity), he does not hide his admiration for them.

“The individuals of this group (*ahl-i kashf*) have passed all veils and have become honored through the encounter with God, and they have seen and understood through the knowledge of certainty and the eye of certainty that existence is for God alone. For this reason the individual of this group are called People of Oneness—they do not see or know anything other than God. They see and know everything as God.”⁴⁵⁹

Although Nasafi seems to underline a certain kind of mystical experience as the essential basis for the people of Oneness, his further expositions make it clear that we are faced with a philosophical outlook that is rooted within a detailed perception of the cosmos and the Divine. Mentioning the four oceans of the being (the Essence of God, the Attributed Spirit, *Mulk*, *Malakūt*), he indicates that ‘ulama’, philosophers, Sufis, and people of Oneness all confirm these spheres; however, philosophers and people of Oneness disagree with the rest by indicating that these are not created because it is impossible for non-existent to become existent.⁴⁶⁰ The same idea appears in the *Sohbetname* where Ibrahim Efendi indicates that the existent does not become non-existent and the non-existent does not become existent.⁴⁶¹

Nasafi also indicates that the people of Oneness are two groups with regards to the perception of God versus the nature. The first group indicates that existence is not more than one and that existence is God the Most High, and these are called naturalists.

⁴⁵⁸ “Aziz Nasafi” *EIr* (Hermann Landolt).

⁴⁵⁹ Ridgeon, 89.

⁴⁶⁰ Ridgeon, 117.

⁴⁶¹ *Sohbetname*, 39a.

The second group, on the other hand, differentiates between the real and imaginary existence, and indicates that the world and beings are all but a mirage and apparition. The only real being is God. This group of people are called sophists.⁴⁶² Nasafi provides no further information on the identity of these two groups, there is no information on their constituents, or in which cultural realm they functioned.

This distinction, however, seems to point out to various colorings among the exponents of mystical oneness: the second one resembles the Platonic perception of the universe, which proved applicable within the framework of Islamic teachings. The first group, on the other hand, due a more clear identification of God with the nature was bound to get into trouble.⁴⁶³

Among the various designations Nasafi uses to describe the *wahdati*s, it is not easy to detect within which group Ibrahim Efendi saw himself. At one point in the *Sohbetname*, however, Ibrahim Efendi audaciously puts into words the complex relationship between God and the nature: “For the people of Oneness, the Absolute One does not have an independent existence of Its own that is attached to or separate from the

⁴⁶² Ridgeon, 90-2.

⁴⁶³ It seems that a strong current of this form of “nature mysticism” was prevalent in Turkish mysticism and its manifestations in poetry is quite visible. The idea appears in the poetry of Yunus Emre who lived before the emergence of the Bayramiyye and the Hurufiyye. In one couplet Yunus says: “*Hakk* is exhausted in the universe, yet nobody knows *Hakk* / Ask him from yourself, he is not separate from you” (Köprülü, *Ilk Mutasavvıflar*, 293). Another writer of mystical stock and considered to be Bektashi, Kaygusuz Abdal, acknowledges these complex theosophical views in quite simple Turkish. In one of his sayings, he says: “This is the news: just like He concealed the human being under clothing, God also hid himself (under the clothing of nature).” [Abdurrahman Guzel, *Dilgüşā* (Ankara: Sevinc Matbaası, 1987), 60.] His poetry is filled with expositions of the way in which the divine being concealed itself under the wraps of this universe. It is possible to draw similarities between Bayrami-Malāmi teachings and Kaygusuz Abdal’s writings. (Thanks to A. Karamustafa for bringing this to my attention.) It is possible that Kaygusuz Abdal was read by the Bayrami-Malāmis. Vizeli Alaeddin also used the title Kaygusuz in his poetry. For Golpınarlı, it is quite likely that the latter had read and was influenced by Kaygusuz Abdal. In *Sohbetname*, Ibrahim Efendi considers Vizeli Aladdin to be more careful with the language he uses (that he did not let his *hāl* (mystical state) get in the way of his *kāl* (sayings, utterings). *Sohbetname*, 9b.

outward things, which are also known as the existents, the possibilities, the universe, and all things beside God.”⁴⁶⁴

Aziz Nasafi in fact uses a similar exposition as he tries to illustrate how the people of the Oneness understood the Essence of God in relation to the cosmos. In his *Maqṣad-i Aqṣā*, which was a popular reading material among the Sufis of the Ottoman Empire, Nasafi examines this relation by putting emphasis on the specific intrinsic quality of the Divine Being: subtlety (*latafat*).⁴⁶⁵ First, he articulates how subtlety has a way of diffusing within the grossness through the examples of four elements: earth, water, air, and fire:

“... each one of these four things has a separate location in this world due to its subtle or gross nature. They also have a location within each other; they possess with-ness (*ma'iyya*) with each other. For example, if a bowl is filled with earth, there is a place for water, even though earth cannot be in that place. In that water, there is a place for air, and water cannot be in that place. In that air, there is a place for fire, and air cannot be in that place. This is because each thing which is more subtle has greater power of penetration, pervasion and encompassment.”⁴⁶⁶

Trying to establish what he means by subtlety and its ability to pervade and encompass, Nasafi regrets that examples of four elements do not quite illustrate his point, since they are “all bodies in a location and direction, and they are capable of separation and division, and breaking apart and coming together.” As the discourse, he says, “concerns the essence of God, which is not a body, and is not in any direction or location and is not capable of separation and division,” one needs to provide better examples regarding God’s encompassing ability which is featured in Qur’anic several verses, including “Are they in doubt concerning the encounter with their Lord. Does He not

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, 3a.

⁴⁶⁵ God’s subtlety is based on the Qur’anic verse 6:104: “He is the Subtle (*Latif*), the Knowing.”

⁴⁶⁶ Ridgeon, 68.

encompass (*muhit*) everything?” and “To God belong the East and West, so whichever way you turn, there is God’s face.”⁴⁶⁷

A better example, Nasafi argues, can be found in the position of the human spirit versus the human body. “Know that the human spirit is *with* the body, not *in* the body ... There is not one particle of the body, which the spirit is not with, and which it does not encompass and of which it is not aware through essence ... Oh dervish! The human spirit is not inside the body, outside the body, attached to the body, or separated from the body. Here the secret of *He who knows himself knows His Lord* shows its beauty.”⁴⁶⁸

Continuing on the discourse, he makes the same statement that Ibrahim Efendi makes regarding God: “ ... you have understood that God Most High is not inside the world, outside the world, attached to the world or separated from the world, and you have discovered the secret of *He is with you wherever you are and God sees what you do* (Q 57:4), now know that this is the gnosis about God’s essence and this is the foundation of gnosis.”⁴⁶⁹

Thus we have a vision of the Divine Being that is intrinsically woven within the beings of this universe, and yet is not fully contained in them. The way the divine being operates is so intrinsically woven with the bodies of the universe that without them all of

⁴⁶⁷ Q 41:54 (my translation differs from the one in Ridgeon) and 2:115.

⁴⁶⁸ Ridgeon, 70. Muhammad Parsa advocated a very similar understanding in *Fasl al-Khitab*. “The togetherness between the spirit (*rūh*) and the body (*jasad*) is akin to the togetherness between the Truth—may he be praised—and the whole created universe ... in the words of some people of knowledge (*‘urafā’*) the human body is composed of four opposing elements: earth, wind, water, and fire. These four exist in a truly combined state in the body. The place of the earth in the body is obvious and evident; water has a place within earth, subtle and appropriate for the subtlety of water; wind has a place within water, more subtle than the place of water; and fire has a place within wind that is more subtle than that of wind. The spirit is truly present in every atom of the body but without being contained in a particular place. Containment and transfer are accidentals related to bodies, none of which can be applied to the spirit.” See S. Bashir, *Sufi Bodies* (New York Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2011), Kindle edition, locations 865-74.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, 71. The last verse Nasafi quotes from the Qur’an indicating God’s closeness (with-ness/*ma‘iyya*) was most notably used by ‘Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani to make a case for his mystical outlook.

this manifestation comes to an end. Thus says Ibrahim Efendi, “O my dearest, (know that) the spirit can not be seen without the body”.⁴⁷⁰ It is, on the other hand, the human body that is most superior among the existents of the universe. In this sense, the human body is the ultimate form through which the divine essence is able to manifest itself.

Human Being as the Goal of Creation

In the same way with many followers of Sufism, Bayrami-Malāmis thought of God as the Reality itself, the only real existence that has or can be. Before the beginning of the time, God existed as undifferentiated Oneness, *ahadiyet*. Formation of the universe as we know it took place when this undifferentiated entity, became manifest in differentiated and limited forms of being.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, 30b. “*Can gorunmez tensiz ey canim benim.*” At one point, on the other hand, Ibrahim Efendi distinguishes his standpoint from those who simply identify God with the beings of the universe. He sees it as a vulgar form of teaching of oneness. *Sohbetname*, 10a. “*Tawhid* of those who say that all things are purely (Him), has been called the *tawhid* of the gypsies.” See this quote from Shaykh Bedreddin’s *Waridat* explaining the close association between the body and the soul: “... all levels (of existence) is related to the level of bodies (*jism*). If it (the level of bodies) disappears, there will be nothing remaining from the spirits (*rūh*). The author of *Mirsad al-‘Ibad* [referring to Najm ad-Din Razi, gives an example and likens the body to the sugar cane and the spirit to the sugar within them. He imagines that spirits can exist without the bodies and understands the bodies as envelopes for the spirits. However this is not the reality of the matter; because the body of the human being was the spirit (at one point), it was the Reality (*Haqq*), and densified thanks to the accumulation of forms (*suret*). If the forms are abolished, the spirits regain their fineness (*latāfat*) and *Haqq* who is without equal remains.” (Golpinarli, *Seyh Bedreddin*, 6) It should also be noted that in the school of Ibn ‘Arabi (along with some Persian Sufis) it was held that even the “*jamādat*,” the lifeless materials, possessed a spirit and consciousness of some sort (Mustafa Rasim Efendi, *Tasavvuf Sözlüğü*, 372).

In the *Irshadname*, this process of formation is explained by describing the emanation of the spirits from the Divine Reality in the primordial time. It is the ‘*ishk*,⁴⁷¹ the sensual uncontrollable desire that urged the divine being to see and love itself, which caused this separation to take place.

Along with a common tradition of Sufi metaphysics, *Irshadname* proposes that the Muhammadan Reality⁴⁷² served as the first mirror for the beauty of the Lord and became the basis for the production of all inferior forms of life.⁴⁷³ The process is explained through a prophetic hadith referring to the very first substance that God made use of in order to construct the universe.

.... the beginning and gist of everything is the Muhammadan Reality and it was essentially created from the light of God’s own eternal besoughtedness. All other spirits were created from the reflection of the ray of the Muhammadan Reality. Since the Muhammadan Reality was created from God’s own light and all other spirits were created from the reflection of the light of Muhammadan Reality, it necessarily follows that the origin of all things is the Muhammadan Reality. Likewise the origin of the Muhammadan Reality is God the Almighty. According to this meaning, on the day of origin all spirits were not separate from the Muhammadan Reality, and it was not separate from God the most high. Rather all of them were non-existent in the essence of God. The ancient, singular, living, self-subsisting and eternally besoughted One was just

⁴⁷¹ Several English translations of ‘*ishk* have traditionally been used: love, desire, passion. I have in the course of writing, either preferred one of these options based on the context, or chose to leave it as it is. The Arabic original, as well as its adoptions in Persian, Turkish and Urdu, reveals a sense of strong sensual attraction as well as an uncontrollable physical draw that is hard to provide in English translations. “Love is a link through which all being is connected and around which they cycle,” says Ibrahim Efendi. *Sohbetname*, 2a-b. One’s struggle to attain union is also embedded with the extent of his love: “The struggle to overcome self and the sense of duality is made possible by the power of love ... this love exists in us because it is a part also of God’s own nature. God’s love, ‘*ishk*, which caused the world to be, and made Adam, Adam. The individual in the world also feels it, and is drawn with a desire that burns the soul by its fire back toward the source in which alone it can rest. ... when one has thus attained, all sense of duality has gone” (Birge, 111).

⁴⁷² Some times it is referred as *Nur-u Muhammad*, the light of Muhammad, as well. See “Nūr Muhammadi” EI² (U. Rubin). It signifies Muhammad’s pre-existent entity that preceded the creation of Adam. It is also the first emanated one (‘*akl-i kulli*), which fully represents God in its being.

⁴⁷³ It is possible that Ibrahim Effendi would not agree to this notion, since according to Nasafi, it is for Sufis that the creation emerges from the Muhammadan reality. According to the people of Oneness the first being was accepted to be “hyle”, a substance capable of taking various forms and shapes (Ridgeon, 118 and 158 among others).

Himself. Duality and separation occurred after coming into this world of multiplicity and everybody forgot about their origin.⁴⁷⁴

When oneness starts to reveal itself in the multitude of this world, the spirits acquire forms with the help of four elements.

... all spirits in accordance with (the verse) “I breathed into him of my spirit” (Q 15:29) emerged from one origin, descended from that world of oneness to this world multiplicity, wore the flesh of creation through oppositions of the four elements⁴⁷⁵ and joined the cycle of this world. The sun, the moon, and all the other stars in the sky, and everything on the earth act and move in accordance with the cycle from day to day.⁴⁷⁶

After falling into this cycle, the material beings yearn to be reunited with the Divine Reality in their prior form. This reunification is only possible through appearing on the level of human being and knowing the truth about the human-self as the most perfect mirror of the Reality. The goal in appearing on the level of the human being is learning the gnosis of God, returning to the origin, thus arriving at and connecting with the circle of attainment to God.

It has been related in the tradition that these spirits upon falling apart from the threshold of God and the absolute King, wailed and moaned. In accordance with the purport of “Guide us to the straight way” (Q 1:6) they wanted to be shown a way to return to the glorious court of God. To all of them, the highest calling and pleasant addressing of the Creator occurred: “Go to Adam, so that through his heart you can find a way back to me and obtain the capability to attain my glorious threshold.” In this manner He commanded and destined. In accordance with this destination, all created things trying to find a way to Adam (human being) restlessly fell into the cycle.

⁴⁷⁴ *Irshadname*, 49a-b.

⁴⁷⁵ The four elements are earth, wind, water, and fire. Ibrahim Efendi says: “Do you not see that the creator / Becomes apparent through the four elements.” (*Sohbetname*, 7b.) Greco-Persian philosophy made references to these elements in their effort of explaining the universe. For some insight regarding their place in Persian culture see, “Elements” *Elr* (Mansour Shaki); also relevant to the issue is this study on Empedocles, the ancient Greek philosopher who understood the creation in terms of coming together and dissolution of four elements through love and strife. For an interesting study regarding Empedocles and his vision of monism within the multiplicity of these elements, see Peter Kingsley, *Reality* (Point Reyes: The Golden Sufi Center, 2003).

⁴⁷⁶ *Irshadname*, 49b-50a.

Thus in the *Irshadname*, Hakiki describes the construction of the cosmos in terms of a cycle where the spirits emerge from the spirit of Muhammad, become infused with the bodies through the opposition of four elements. Once spirits fall into this state, they try to find a way back to their original state of union by appearing on the level of the human being.

The idea is explained in a similar and yet distinguished manner in another piece of writing regarding the Bayrami-Malāmis. In *Sefine-i Evliya*, the author Huseyin Vassaf explains that he found the following information within an unidentified treatise that explained teachings of Sunullah Gaybi. He says that this is how this treatise explained Gaybi's standpoint:

Gaybi, the honorable master, talks about the cycle of the nature and the perfection of human being in his poetry and writing. Meaning: this creation was not in a state of being capable of knowing itself. When the spirit of the world (*ruh-u 'alem*) appeared under every appearance and completed the cycle, it appeared under the guise of human being at last and showed his beauty. This is what is called ascension (*istiwā'*). Under the manifestation of human being, the cycle was completed; it ended and ascended (to the throne). The body of the human being is the throne (*'arsh*).⁴⁷⁷ The speech and the intellect, in their perfect forms, appeared in the human being and manifested themselves. Upon this, the hidden treasure has become manifest. Meaning, when the elements of the nature brought together their powers and caused ecstasy in the human being, they also came to know themselves through the intellect and comprehension of the human being.

According to this passage, the ecstasy experienced by the human being holds a cosmological significance. Once the human being experiences the divine oneness surrounding the universe, all particles constructing his being come to know their own divine origins as well. The same treatise continues to explain Gaybi's viewpoint in this manner:

⁴⁷⁷ See the section on Hurufis, regarding the Hurufi interpretation of the verse (Q 20:5), *istiwā' alā 'arshihi*—when God had finished creation of inferior and subordinate creatures, he ascended on the throne.

Accordingly the human being is the only goal in creation. He is like the fruit of the tree. Just like the fruit contains all capabilities of the tree, the human being is the core of this material universe. From the perspective of his intellect, he is its ears and eyes ... The process of the fruit emerging from the tree, and the tree emerging from the fruit is called the cycle (*dawr*). The wretched men are like raw fruits. The complete ones are like ripe fruits. Thus the latter can lead to another tree and give many other fruits. From the human being, a great cosmos can emerge. The hell, the heaven, *'arsh* and *kursi* are all within him. The whole circle of existence (*kawn fasad*) in the universe takes place so that one complete human being can be raised.⁴⁷⁸

Both Ibrahim Efendi and Gaybi enjoyed using the tree and fruit metaphor in order to explain the position of the human being vis-a-vis the cosmos.⁴⁷⁹ Its virtue layed in helping understand how a human being, seemingly insignificant and small in appearance, could be the pivotal point for the construction of the whole universe. It also highlighted the innate connection the cosmos shared with the human being.

As can be seen from the passage, Bayrami-Malāmis talked about the significance of the human being so passionately mainly because the issue related to the importance of the perfect man who is the goal of the cycle of life. Therefore, it is not always possible to distinguish whether it is the ordinary man or the perfect man that Bayrami-Malāmis talk about when they use highly loaded language regarding the human being. The close relationship between the two is also highlighted in the way Bayrami-Malāmis understood

⁴⁷⁸ SE, II, 496-7. Compare this idea of the *dawr* with the understanding of *wahdat al-wujud* of Abdulkirim al-Jili (d.1424) in his treatise titled *al-Insan al-Kamil (The Perfect Human Being)*. "The created world is the outward aspect of that which in its inward aspect is God. Thus in the Absolute we find a principle of diversity, which it evolves by moving downwards, so to speak, from a plane beyond quality and relation, beyond even the barest Oneness, until by degrees it clothes itself with manifold names and attributes and takes a visible shape in the infinite variety of Nature ... The Absolute cannot rest in diversity. Opposites must be reconciled and at last united, the Many must again be One. Recurring to Jili's metaphor, we may say that as water becomes ice and then the water once more, so the Essence crystallized in the world of attributes seeks to return to its pure and simple self. In order to do so, it must move upwards, reversing the direction of its previous descent from absoluteness ... the Absolute, having completely realized itself in human nature, returns into itself through the medium of human nature; or more intimately, God and man become one in the Perfect Man, the enraptured prophet or saint."⁴⁷⁸ (Reynold A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 84.)

⁴⁷⁹ See the usage of the same metaphor by Aziz Nasafi in Ridgeon, 125-6.

Adam, who is at times viewed as an ordinary human being, while at other times he is the archetypal man through whom the whole creation came into being.

It is known that the monistic trend within Sufism has always underlined the significance of the human being. The idea is detectable in the writings of ‘Attar, Najm ad-Din Daya, and Ibn ‘Arabi among others. According to Aziz Nasafi, on the other hand, the People of Oneness held a distinct viewpoint regarding the human being, which was not always shared by the Sufis:

The people of Oneness say to the Sufis: we say the very same thing that you say about God’s essence. God Most High has both a non-manifest and a manifest dimension. You describe God’s non-manifest dimension, but not God’s manifest dimension. Our discourse with you concerns the manifest dimension. We say that God’s essence was a hidden treasure and it desired to be known, and this hidden treasure appeared in order to be recognized, and it desired to see its own beauty and witness its attributes, names, actions, and wisdom. It can see its own beauty in a mirror, and it makes a mirror out of itself ... O dervish, He made the mirror in which He sees Himself, and this mirror is Adam.⁴⁸⁰

Thus Nasafi seems to indicate that People of Oneness find fault in Sufis because the latter does not talk about the manifest dimension of God’s essence, which is none other than the human being.

Hurufis might have followed the same trend, leaving a significant trace in the way Bayrami-Malāmis understood the human being. As it has been explained before, the Hurufis saw the human being as engraved with the literal image of God. They understood the Qur’anic uttering “*‘alā al-‘arsh istawā* / He sat himself upon the Throne” to be referring to the creation of Adam, “sitting” being a metaphor for God’s imprinting a full image of himself upon clay, a mixture of elements of water and earth.⁴⁸¹ They also liberally used letter symbolism to indicate that the human body is engraved with the

⁴⁸⁰ Ridgeon, 123-4.

⁴⁸¹ Bashir, “Deciphering the Cosmos,” 176.

actual script of God. Letter symbolism of this sort does not usually appear in the Bayrami-Malāmi writings. The idea, however, is not completely foreign to them, and it appears here and there in the *Sohbetname*. In one instance Ibrahim Efendi says: “Just as the whole human body is a model for the name of God, the name also appears in certain limbs. In this regard, if you put your hand in ink and then put it on a piece of white sheet, engraving of the name of God will appear.”⁴⁸² On the other hand Hakiki quotes the verse “Since the best mould is your image, make your interior worthy of that image,” pointing out to the superiority of the outward form of the human being.

Reincarnatory Eschatology

The idea that simple elements first appear on the plane of minerals, then progress to the level of vegetables and animals, and finally find perfection on the level of the human being was expressed in various Sufi writings.⁴⁸³ In the school of Ibn ‘Arabi, the idea is conceptualized as the ascent and descent of the man (*qaws al-tarkīb*).⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² *Sohbetname*, 2b.

⁴⁸³ Haja Ali al-Ansari (d.1088) says: “From the unmanifest I came, / and pitched my tent / In the forest of material existence / I passed through / Mineral and vegetable kingdoms, / Then my mental equipment / Carried me into the animal kingdom; / Having reached there I crossed beyond it; / Then in the crystal clear shell of human heart / I nursed the drop of self into a Pearl, / And in association of good men. / Wandered around the Prayer House, / And having experienced that, crossed beyond it; / Then I took the road that leads to Him, / And became a slave at his gate / Then the duality disappeared / And I became absorbed in Him.” From *The Invocations of Sheikh AbdAllah Ansari* (d. 1005-1090), trans. John Murray, 19-20. A similar idea appears in Rumi (d. 1273) as well. “First he appeared in the realm of inanimate; / Thence came into the world of plants and lived / The plant-life many a year, nor called to mind / What he had been, then took the onward way / To animal existence, and once more / Remembers naught of that life vegetive. / Save when he feels himself moved with desire / Towards it in the season of sweet flowers, / As babes that seek

The story of man's voyage from the simple elements into the perfect human being, on the other hand, is the backbone of a genre in Turkish Sufi poetry known as *devriyyes*.⁴⁸⁵ These were mostly penned by the poets of Alevi-Bektashi coloring, and contained elements that were not always compatible with the main doctrines of Islam. Bayrami-Malāmis generously contributed to this genre as well. Among the Bayrami-Malāmi figures, Kaygusuz Vizeli Alaaddin, Sarban Ahmed,⁴⁸⁶ Idris Muhtefi,⁴⁸⁷ Ibrahim Efendi,⁴⁸⁸ and Sunullah Gaybi⁴⁸⁹ have all written *devriyyes*, some of which became well known popular even within the more "orthodox" Sufi orders.

Thus, evidently, Bayrami-Malāmis showed great interest in the idea of the cycle of existence. They referred to a physical process in which elements and particles

the breast and know not why. / Again the wise creator when Thou knowest / Uplifted him from animality / No man's estate, and so from realm to realm / Advancing, he became intelligent, / Cunning, and keen of wit, as he is now. / No memory of his past abides with him, / And from his present soul he shall be changed. / Though he is fallen asleep, God will not leave him, / In this forgetfulness. Awakened, he

Will laugh to think what troubles dreams he had, / And wonder how this happy state of being / He could forget and not receive that all / Those pains and sorrows were the effect of sleep / And guile and vain illusion. So this world / Seems lasting, though 'tis bit the sleeper's dream / Who, when the appointed day shall dawn, escapes / From dark imaginings that haunted him, / And turns with laughter on his phantom griefs / When he beholds his everlasting home." (Reynold A. Arberry, *Rumi: Poet and Mystic (1207-1273)* (London, 1950), 187; from *Mathnawi* IV, 3637).

⁴⁸⁴ This form of expressing the voyage of the human being, however, we are cautioned should not be considered as a 'real' physical journey. See W. Chittick and P. L. Wilson, "Introduction" in *Fakhruddin Iraqi's Divine Flashes*, 163. "... one must be careful not to imagine some sort of physical journey by man through the worlds. As Qunawi explains, man's journey is "supraformal" which means it relates to his "meaning" or immutable archetypal-entity. The various worlds and levels man "passes through" are from another point of view—the realities of that the human reality embraces and that unfold in stages as the Hidden treasure attains the perfection of distinct-manifestation."

⁴⁸⁵ For more information on this form of poetry see: Abdullah Uzman, "The Theory of the *Dawr* and the *Dawriyas* in Ottoman Sufi Literature," in *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society*, ed. Ahmet Yasar Ocak (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 2005), 445-75; Koprulu, *Ilk Mutasavviflar*, 298-9; MM, 95-7, 274; Fazlallah wrote *devriyyes* as well, see Usluer 240-43; for the Bektashi forms of *devriyye*, see Birge, 115, 120-5; for Nurbaksh's vision where he seems himself creating and devouring the cycles of time, see Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, 154.

⁴⁸⁶ *Devriyyes* by Vizeli Alladdin and Sarban Ahmed can be found in Golpinarli, *Kaygusuz Vizeli Alaaddin* (Istanbul, 1932), 42, 53-6, 76-7.

⁴⁸⁷ Idris Muhtefi's *devriyye*, which has a sarcastic tone, can be found in 125-6, with the necessary explanation for this heavily symbolic piece of poetry. A late Naqshbandi shaykh, Ali Şermi Efendi, wrote a commentary on this *devriyye*, which can be found in Tek, *Melamet Risaleleri*, 441-56.

⁴⁸⁸ Information regarding *Kaside-i Mīmiyye* can be found in, F. Abdullah Tansel, "Olanlar Shekhi Ibrahim Efendi ve Devriyesi," *AUIFD* 17 (1971): 187-99.

⁴⁸⁹ Gaybi's *Kesfu'l-Ghita* can be found in MM, 116-8; Doğan, 385-90.

constantly retransformed themselves and helped constitute various bodies of the universe. They especially talked about the coming together and then diffusing of the elements that construct the human being. We are told that Gaybi thought, “it is called *haşr* (gathering, with a apocalyptic nuance) when the elements of the nature come together to construct a human being. With the outward death, the body of the human being decomposes and parts of the human being returns to the basic materials. This is called *neşr* (spreading out, with an apocalyptic nuance).”⁴⁹⁰

In Hakiki’s *Irshadname*, on the other hand, the idea appears in a slightly different form when he gives this insight into the eventual destination of the human being:

By (appearing on the level of the human being), they (the particles) can obtain the aptitude to know the essence (of God) and His making, and acquire perfections of the creator. As a result they break away from the cycle of this elaborate world and find deliverance from the abyss of coming and going. They return to the primordial origin, which is the closeness to the threshold of God. They remain in this position for eternity obtaining governance and greatness of the Lord, His felicity, and eternal besoughtness of His highness ... If the human being cannot obtain the divine perfections, break away from the cycle, attain God and find salvation while in this image, on the other hand, his way to the heavenly world will be tied up after leaving this image. His destination will be far away and his station will remain in the cycle.⁴⁹¹

The text moves to the discussion of hell at this point, which obviously is no different from “remaining in the cycle” for Hakiki. The torment, he says, might continue for thousands of years, or for eternity, based on various reports attributed to Moses, Jesus, and Prophet Muhammad. Thus Hakiki advises his readers to make the most of their time as a human being, learn the gnosis, and not be trapped in a continuous cycle of appearing on different levels of being.

⁴⁹⁰ Vassaf II, 496-7. In *Keşfu'l-Gita*, Sunullah Gaybi asserts that the simple man, once he appeared as he is, already experienced his own apocalypse. His actions on this stage, therefore, determine the conditions of his after life.

⁴⁹¹ *Irshadname*, 51b.

Ibrahim Efendi, on the other hand, does not shy away from using the heavily heresiographical term “*tanāsukh*” at times. “In every sect (*mazhab*), there is a profound trace from *tanāsukh*,” he comments, and in another instance, he relates that ‘Attar has said: “Those who are the carriers of this knowledge / They are the accepters of *tanaāsukh* and *ittihād* (complete union with God).”⁴⁹²

In another instance, however, Ibrahim Efendi sees the process to be different from *tanāsukh* in the sense that there is no transmission of the spirit, but rather obtainment of an outward form in accordance with one’s dominant quality.⁴⁹³ He explains that “whatever attribute (*sifat*) is dominant in one’s last breath, this attribute becomes his home, and he is resurrected (*haşr*) in this form.”⁴⁹⁴ It was along the same lines that Aziz Nasafî explained the idea of the cycle held by the people of the Oneness: “it is from the perspective of relation, not transmigration when this form departs from this world and another form comes and is described by the same attribute and is called by the same name.”⁴⁹⁵

In a similar sense, Bayrami-Malāmîs understood that those who had reached the gnosis in their lifetime would be re-fashioned in exceptional terms after their death. The

⁴⁹² *ibid*, 38b; from ‘Attār’s *Esrarname*.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, 38b.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 38b. Resurrection here should be taken symbolically, as Gaybi pointed out the process of a human being coming together from the particles of the universe was understood to be *haşr*.

⁴⁹⁵ Nasafî, 161. Ibn ‘Arabi’s discussion of the afterlife might be seen as carrying similar resonances: See W. Chittick, “Death and The World of Imagination: Ibn al-Arabi’s Eschatology” *The Muslim World* 78/1(1988): 51-85. See p. 63, “In short, life is process through which a human being shapes his own soul; in death, when the body is discarded, the soul become embodied in in an imaginal form appropriate to its own attributes; likewise, all its works, character traits, knowledge, and aspiration appear to it in appropriate forms. ‘In the isthmus every human being is a pawn to what he has earned, imprisoned in the forms of his works’ (*Futuhat* I 307.22).” Also see, “After death the internal spiritual form will become one’s external and permanent form. When death occurs all preparations end and one’s spiritual status becomes fixed. The day of resurrection will entail judgment in accordance to each person’s (now external) spiritual form” (Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 91-2).

following anecdote that is recorded to have occurred between two esteemed personas of the Bayrami-Malāmiyya is quite illuminating in this regard.

Lamekani Huseyin Efendi was present during the passing away of Hasan Kabaduz and wondered to himself what happens to the thing that keeps the body alive, into which color it turns, and into what thing it evolves. Hasan Kabaduz realized what was going through his mind and said: “O master (*Mevlāna*), we become existence (*kawn*) with the existence.”⁴⁹⁶

It is not easy to determine what Hasan Kabaduz exactly means. There is definitely referral to his retransformation and repositioning as one of the building blocks of the universe. This should, however, not mean that Kabaduz, as a person who attained gnosis, imagines reappearing on the level of any other simple earthly being. *Sohbetname* verifies this understanding according to this explanation Ibrahim Efendi provides regarding the concept of “becoming existence with the existence” in another instance:

The wise man (*dānā*), once he gains the knowledge of his own being, and attains the degree of “to become existence with the existence,” he re-emerges (*burūz*)⁴⁹⁷ in another loci of manifestation and leaves this world as a wise man and arrives back as a wise man. “The believers do not die, but they travel from one land to the other, from one loci of manifestation to the other” refers to this meaning ... In the language of oneness (*lisan-i wahdat*), the first formation (*neş’e-i ūlā*) is regarded as the world (*dunyā*), and after leaving it behind, appearing in another loci of manifestation is considered the afterlife (*ākhirat*).⁴⁹⁸

Thus this explanation seems to indicate that once the perfect ones die, they appear under the appearance of another perfect one. Thus gnostics and saints share a similar

⁴⁹⁶ *Sohbetname*, 12a.

⁴⁹⁷ See Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, 98-9, for Nurbakhsh’s understanding of *burūz* (Bashir translates it as projection): “... the Muhammadan Reality appears in the human body through the process of projection (*barazāt*), which is not transmigration (*tanāsukh*). The difference between the two is that transmigration occurs when a soul departs one body and enters an embryo ready for a soul –meaning the fourth month from the time the sperm settled in the womb- and this removal from one body and arrival at the other occurs instantaneously, without a time interval. However, projection occurs when a complete soul pours into a perfect being (*kāmil*) in the same way that epiphanies pour into him and he becomes their locus of manifestation.” Bashir seems right in his comment that although Nurbakhsh distinguishes projection from transmigration through the way the soul is transferred, the actual event that takes place is essentially the same in two processes. Also see Moin, 47-9 for the ways in which the concept of *burūz* was utilized in the socio-political realm.

⁴⁹⁸ *Sohbetname*, 38a.

essence within their beings, and they are, in a sense, re-projections of the past perfect figures.

Another Bayrami-Malāmi figure, Sarı Abdullah, deals with the matter in a more respectful manner to the Islamic texts. He confines the discussion to the issue of *maskh*—transformation of the human being into a more deficient being.⁴⁹⁹ The term, indeed, appeared in the Qur'an⁵⁰⁰ and it was something that the theologians could not completely deny. Providing examples from the Qur'an and the hadith, Sarı Abdullah underlines that quite possibly people will be resurrected in the forms of various animals based on their doings in the world. Thus he indicates their innate qualities become qualities of their forms, i.e. they carry qualities of apes, scorpions, etc.⁵⁰¹ He also makes use of the concept of renewal of the skins in the hell [*"baddalnāhum culūdan"* (Q 4:56)] and explains that for each human being there are various spiritual "skins" (*julūd ma'naviyye*). Some of these skins belong to a praiseworthy spirituality related to the light, while some others belong to condemned qualities associated with the lower-self and the darkness. These condemned qualities, he notes, can be turned into the light based on whether one attains the knowledge of God.

After this, his discussion of the topic becomes highly symbolical and makes use of Najm ad-Din Razi's commentary on the verse Q 2:257: "God is the supporter (*walī*) of the believers. He brings them out of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their supporters (*awliyā'*) are devils who bring them out of light into darkness. Those are the people of the fire in which they shall abide forever."⁵⁰² Thus he concludes that man's

⁴⁹⁹ See "Maskh," *EF*² (Ch. Pellat).

⁵⁰⁰ He refers to Q 36:67.

⁵⁰¹ *Semerat*, 218-20.

⁵⁰² Q. 2:257; *Semerat*, 231-2.

evolution into the realm of the light, is related to his association with the *awliyā'*, swiftly moving from explaining a questionable Bayrami-Malāmi standpoint to making a point for the case of *awliyā'*. He indicates that it is association with the *awliyā'* that will gain someone the ability to transform his condemned animalistic qualities into praiseworthy God-like qualities (*takhallaqu bi akhlāq Allah*). Once one achieves this, he indicates, worries over the afterlife and changing of the skins become easy matters to wrap one's mind around.

In doing that, Sarı Abdullah, leads us back into the heart of the matter, the one and most important concept within the Bayrami-Malāmiyya. This concept is no other than a distinct form of devotion to the *awliyā'*, a consecration with many facets including messianic connotations.

The Cult of *Awliyā'*

There is no questioning that the notion of the *awliyā'* lies at the heart of the Bayrami-Malāmi worldview. The deep veneration and admiration for the *awliyā'* is also highlighted in *Irshadname*, appears in all sorts of poetry put forth by various Bayrami-Malāmi figures, and takes up significant space in the writings of Ibrahim Efendi and Sunullah Gaybi. In the *Mir'at Askeri* provides ample examples regarding the way in which Bayrami-Malāmi tradition viewed the saints of God as well. Thus one comes

across quite a rich collection containing the states, attributes, and implications of the holy men of God.

Askeri speaks of the *awliyā'* as individuals who have been blessed with passing down of a specific delegation (*walāyat*). This delegation is related to the eternal spirit of the prophet, termed *Nūr-u Muhammad*. It is this light that Askeri believes to have continued to be represented by a *walī* at any given time. In this sense, Askeri uses the concept of *walī/awliyā'* in similar terms with the perfect human being (*insān-i kāmīl*),⁵⁰³ and the pole of the universe (*kutb*).⁵⁰⁴ For him *awliyā'* stands as the envoy of men who appeared one by one at specific times in history and represented the light of Muhammad during that particular time.

He comments that prophets and saints contain the treasure of entrustment (*amānat*) and the mystery of *walāyat*. This mystery passed on from the prophet to his associates (*ashāb*) and will continue to be represented until the Day of Judgment.⁵⁰⁵ It is in accordance with the degree of love (*'ishk*) that one attains such a status.⁵⁰⁶ He is rewarded a share from the Universal Intellect (*'akl-i kull*).⁵⁰⁷ These individuals are blessed with the power of divine love and have the ability to cast it into the hearts of their followers by a single look (*nazar*).

Saint are the sultans of the time and have the power to execute their wishes (*sāhib-i tasarruf*). Askeri underlines the power of the saint by saying: "The name *awliyā'*

⁵⁰³ The perfect human being who is at times associated with the primordial man, or the microcosm, and commonly understood to be the head of the *awliyā'*. See "al-Insān al-Kāmīl" EI² (Arnaldez, R.) Askeri notes that the perfect man is called *awliyā'* among people who are in the path of *'ishk* (MI, 47 and 177).

⁵⁰⁴ *Kutb* refers to the head of the saintly hierarchy, there needs to be one at each end every age. See "al-Kutb, 2. In mysticism" EI² (F. de Jong).

⁵⁰⁵ MI, 159.

⁵⁰⁶ "Adam became the locus of manifestation for the mystery of the entrustment / And love (*'ishk*) became the guide for the people of *walāyat*." MI, 4.

⁵⁰⁷ MI, 177.

is given to this *sultan* who is the possessor of power in the station of providence.”⁵⁰⁸ In many instances, he also talks about the efficiency of the breath of the *awliyā’*, which he likens to that of Jesus who is described to have resurrected the dead with his breath in the Qur’an. *Awliyā’* is the great Adam, he says, and has the ability to cure the grievances.⁵⁰⁹ Followers of such a saint, he indicates, need to be obedient to him at all times. If there is any need, they should be ready to give their lives and fortunes in support of the saint.

In many of the Bayrami-Malāmi writings we find the idea that it is this dedication to the *pīr* that can bring salvation to the disciple rather than anything else. Sunullah Gaybi summarizes this idea by an anecdote in which the real meaning of being a dervish is explained in a curious manner:

“One of the greatest ones among the *awliyā’* gave advice to his youngster (*oğlancık*): “My son, what it means to pledge allegiance and become a dervish is that one gives his life for the sake of his shaykh. If you are able to do that, how nice. Other than this, do not be deceived by the imaginations and absurd beliefs among the Sufis.”⁵¹⁰

In the *Sohbetname*, on the other hand, Ibrahim Efendi puts forth a more learned discussion of the saint, who is referred as *walī*, as well as *dānā*, *insan-i kāmīl*, and the *kutb*. He notes that “the people of oneness by their talk about the perfect human being wish to point out to the human being who becomes a locus of manifestation for all perfections of the Pure Essence (*Zāt-i Pāk*), even Its attribute of divinity (*ulūhiyyet*).”⁵¹¹ He also notes that all creatures (minerals, plants, animals, human beings) pledge allegiance to him, in the sense that they “love” him, bow down before him, and receive

⁵⁰⁸ *MI*, 97. In another context, he explains: “Knowers (*‘arifūn*) among the people of love and perfect ones among the people of tribulation (*derd*) call the *sultan* who is the loci of manifestation for God’s emanation (*fayz*) the real *awliyā’*. It is a rare find, and each one comes after the other.” *MI*, 182.

⁵⁰⁹ *MI*, 73.

⁵¹⁰ Doğan, *Kutahyalı Sunullah Gaybi*, 310; from the treatise entitled *Biatnāme*.

⁵¹¹ *Sohbetname*, 19b.

their life from his blessed being.⁵¹² Ibrahim Efendi also indicates that sainthood (*walāyat*) can hardly be achieved by ascetic practices. Only through being equipped with specific capacity (*isti'dad*) that one can attain such status.⁵¹³ He also underscores the close association between the saint and the Mahdi by saying, “For the gnostic (*‘arif*), writings and descriptions regarding the Mahdi are in fact attributes and qualifications of the perfect man.”⁵¹⁴

‘Alid Loyalty and the Apocalyptic Vision

The way in which Bayrami-Malāmis made sense of the role of the saint was innately related to their understanding of ‘Ali and his symbolical mission. ‘Ali was deeply revered for his status as the head of the saints.⁵¹⁵ It was believed that the prophet

⁵¹² *Sohbetname*, 28b.

⁵¹³ “Sainthood is not achieved through struggle and hard work; rather it is given and relies on the primal capacity (*isti'dad*). Therefore saints have said that one needs to have disposition, so that he can achieve knowing and attaining” (*Sohbetname*, 4a).

⁵¹⁴ *Sohbetname*, 32a.

⁵¹⁵ At times the *silsila* must have been understood exclusively, but as a general rule, lineages of all *tariqas* were related to the heritage of Ali. In the *Semerat*, for instance, it is noted that all Sufi genealogies derive from ‘Ali because of his distinct status. Even Naqshbandis who traditionally trace the beginning of their way to Abu Bakr, Sarī Abdullah claims, need to be thought of being tied to ‘Ali. This is because according to the Naqshbandi *silsila*, Bayazid Bistami receives the teaching from Ja‘far al-Sadiq, the sixth imam of the Shi‘i teaching. (*Semerat*, 127-8) The likelihood of Ja‘far and Bayazid actually meeting is none, since Bayazid was born much later than Ja‘far’s death. Sarī Abdullah acknowledges that, but solves the problem by forming an *uwaysi* link between the two. For him, Ja‘far was the foremost inspiration for Bayazid, therefore the Naqshbandi tradition which ascribes a link to Abu Bakr through Bayazid is mistaken. (*Semerat*, 132-3). In Askeri’s *Mir‘at*, on the other hand, Bayazid is reported to have said, “Had I not met Ja‘far, I would go without faith.” (*MI*, 148-9). Their relationship is also highlighted in the *Sohbetname*. Here Bayazid is depicted as the perfect disciple who is inflicted with the love of his shaykh, Ja‘far. Describing their relationship in the Sufi erotic language of the disciple vis-à-vis the master, Ibrahim Efendi tells the story of how Bayazid failed to find the object that Ja‘far asked him to fetch from the cupboard after spending long years in his service. When Ja‘far asked him how could he not be aware of this object despite

had entrusted the mystery of *walāyat* to ‘Ali before his death. Therefore there are references to *sirr-i ‘Ali* (mystery of ‘Ali)⁵¹⁶ in the Bayrami-Malāmi writings pointing out to this entrustment (*amānat*).⁵¹⁷

In this sense, for the Bayrami-Malāmis, the *silsila* provided the manner in which this entrustment passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, ‘Ali was seen as the head of the *awliyā’*, although it was not through his bloodline that this passing down occurred. There was a clear differentiation from the Shi‘i sensibilities in this regard, yet the Bayrami-Malāmi understanding of the *walī* could be seen as making use of concepts belonging to the Shi‘i milieu. This was, however, hardly a distinct position for the Bayrami-Malāmis. For instance, Sarī Abdullah quotes from Rumi the following verses in an attempt to explain his point of view regarding the saint:

“In every period, a saint arises (*qāim*) / ’Til the day of the Resurrection,
the probation continues.
The living Imam and the *qāim* of the time is this *walī* / Whether from the
offspring of ‘Umar or ‘Ali
O seeker, he is the guided (*mahdī*), and the guide (*hādī*) / He is hidden, and
yet, sitting right in front of you.”⁵¹⁸

According to these lines, even by a Sunni Sufi like Rumi, *walī* could be understood as the riser (*qāim*) and the living imam of the time, both of which carry distinct Shi‘i flavor. This again indicates the commonality of the Sufi background that sustained Bayrami-Malāmis at the time.

spending so much time there, Bayazid responded: “I did not busy myself with anything else other than gazing at your beauty” (*Sohbetname*, 16a).

⁵¹⁶ The idea is expressed in various ways by Askeri, see this verses for instance: “It is the light of the prophet that becomes manifest / And the mystery of ‘Ali that shines today.” (*MI*, 23)

⁵¹⁷ This entrustment refers to the verse Q 33:72, which describes the Trust being offered to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains. All refuse to undertake it with the exception of the human being.

⁵¹⁸ *Semerat*, 6; from *Mathnawi* II, 815 Thanks to Ata Anzali for locating these verses in *Mathnawi* and helping with the translation.

Bayrami-Malāmi poetry exhibits a deep penchant for ‘Ali due to his the status as the head of the *awliyā*. Sarban Ahmad commemorates ‘Ali in a poem by saying: “Leader of all things is ‘Ali / Placed upon all heads is ‘Ali / The closest friend of Mustafa (the prophet) is ‘Ali / Cure of all wounds of the heart is ‘Ali.”⁵¹⁹ Another one of his poems gives praises to the twelve imam, starting with a heartfelt eulogy to his *pīr* and then to the paragon of Muhammad and ‘Ali: “Pir Ali Sultan is our *pīr* / Muhammad-‘Ali is our secret / Light of God is our light / We are the people of secrets and illumination.”⁵²⁰

The paragon of Muhammad-‘Ali, on the other hand, seems to have been used at times in a similar fashion with the Bektashi tradition. This overall identification between the prophet and ‘Ali is underlined by Ibrahim Efendi who notes that the prophet said: “whatever is given to us by *Hakk* also exists in our mirror, locus of manifestation, ‘Ali.”⁵²¹ In a similar but complicated paraphrase, the *Sohbetname* notes the distinct relationship between the three: “The real god is soul (*jān*), the real Muhammad is soul (*jān*), the real ‘Ali is what appears in all loci and unifies all of them.”⁵²²

In the *Irshadname*, on the other hand, most of the teachings pertaining to the significance of the *awliyā* are transmitted from the mouth of ‘Ali. There are also

⁵¹⁹ *MM*, 60. Gölpınarlı, in his discussion of Ahmed Sarban’s Shi‘i tendencies (*MM*, 59-65), concludes that Ahmed Sarban was as one of the Preferred Shi‘a (*Shi‘a-i mufaddila*) who held ‘Ali superior to the rest of the friends of the Prophet without degrading the three caliphs (Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, Usman). He bases Sarban’s Shi‘i-ness on his references to the Mahdi, which Golpinarli accepts to be meant for the twelfth imam. It is highly dubious that Sarban is referring to the latter, rather than a specific Sufi notion of *insān-i kāmīl* who is bound to appear at every age.

⁵²⁰ *MM*, 215.

⁵²¹ *Sohbetname*, 28b.

⁵²² *Sohbetname*, 9b. “*İlāh-i hakikī cāndır. Ve Muhammad-i hakikī yine cāndır. Aliy-yi hakikī cemii mezāhirde olan ve mā-bih’il ittihād olandır.*” This might make more sense in the light of the Bektashi tradition, which perceives ‘Ali to be innately related to the first begotten light of Muhammad. “The idea that God first called into being a radiance from his own light, a radiance called the Light of Muhammad, *Nur-u Muhammad*, is well-known, and the Bektashi understands that it is because of this light that God went on to create the world. The Bektashi only varies the usual idea by identifying ‘Ali also with Muhammad as revealed in this light, and in finding the letters of their initials written in it.” Birge, 114.

instances in which sainthood (*walāyat*) is explained in very close terms with the Shi‘i understanding of the holy leadership (*imāmat*). The following passage from the *Irshadname* is interesting in this regard:

After the seal of the prophets (Muhammad), starting from the time of the head of *awliyā*’, Imām ‘Ali—may God dignify his face—until this time, and from this time until the end of the world, honorable *awliyā*’ are endowed with the mystery of the verse “we make them imams and we make them heirs” (Q 28:5). They are the possessors of leadership (*imāmat*) in the niche of the truth; they are heirs to the prophets and they are the loci of the light of manifestation. In this sense, they were sent to save everybody from the darkness of mortal humanity, to purify them from denial and polytheism (*shirk*), and lead them towards divine guidance and the light of faith.⁵²³

The verse quoted in the text, Q 28:5, belongs to the larger frame of Qur’anic story of Moses versus the Pharaoh. After mentioning the cruelties people endured under Paharaoh, the Qur’an describes how God willed to help out the oppressed by making them leaders, seemingly as the story goes, by choosing to entrust a special mission to Moses. The mission here is both spiritual and political as it becomes evident by the way the story of Moses enfolds in the Qur’an. Thus there exists the basis for the religious roots of social dissent: preferring to be on the side of the oppressed, not cooperating with those in power and hoping for the divinely selected individual to appear. It is quite a rare phenomenon in the history of Islam that this role is reserved for the saints in this particular way.

In another passage in the *Irshadname*, Hakiki depicts the vital importance of the saint for reaching the complete faith. If one is not nurtured by the *walī* of the time, he indicates, he/she might be considered a believer in the eyes of other Muslims, but not in the eyes of the “real believers”:

⁵²³ *Irshadname*, 61b.

... imam of believers ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib—may God dignify his face—said in his noble words “whoever dies without knowing the imam of his time, he dies as an infidel”.⁵²⁴ Intention from the imam of the time is the perfect guide (*murshid-i kāmīl*) who is the locus of the Muhammadan Reality and there is only one of him in the universe. He is the pole of the eighteen thousand worlds. Seekers of wayfaring on the path of the truth cannot find *Hakk* without him and can not be aware of the reality of the seal of prophets, and the mysteries of the eminent *awliyā*. When they are not aware of these, they cannot be informed about the reality of “whoever knows his own soul, knows his Lord”, and cannot obtain comprehension of gnosis of the soul and the Lord. When they do not obtain this, their faith does not become proper and they remain in imitation. If a person like this, does not find and know him (the perfect guide), and believe in him, nevertheless it is not possible for him to know and view the Muhammadan Reality. If he does not know the Muhammadan Reality, his faith will not be complete. Many people, who do not obtain complete faith according to the path, can be complete believers and may even be among the people of the heart. Although they are considered to be believers in the opinion of people of the outward (religion) and law, according to the word of the people of the truth and the path, they remain in blasphemy and polytheism (*shirk*).⁵²⁵

Furthermore, in the *Irshadname*, the monumental significance of the *awliyā*’ is coupled with a dualistic perception of the world: there are those who have reached the truth and then there are those who have not and never will. In this eternal war between the good and the evil, the good refers to those who have admitted the greatness of the *awliyā*’ and have recognized the divine potential within the human being. The evil, on the other hand, represent the opposite; they are the deniers of the truths (*hakāik*) and the specific mission of the *awliyā*’. The conflict between these two groups is understood to have existed since the beginning of the times and is expected to continue for eternity. The *Irshadname* delineates this perception by relying on the teaching of Idris Muhtefi.

⁵²⁴ A literal translation would be “... he dies as a person of *jāhiliyya*.” *Jāhiliyya* refers to the period before Muhammad’s proclamation of prophethood, therefore indicates being completely unaware of Islamic teachings. This saying attributed ‘Ali seems to have appeared in Sufi writings starting from the thirteenth century. Schimmel mentions in surprise that even a strictly Sunni Sufi like Rumi refers to it. Schimmel, “The Ornament of the Saints,” 106. The same saying is also attributed to the Prophet in some sources (Bashir, “Between Mysticism and Messianism,” 297).

⁵²⁵ *Irshadname*, 57b-58a.

My glorious Shaykh—may God serve us with his bowl of mystery of attainment— have said that the cycle (*dawr*) of this world is upon two wheels (*çarh*). One of them revolves to the right, and the other revolves to the left. The one revolving to the right is the eastern wheel and the one revolving to the left is the western wheel. For this reason, the eastern tower is the place of the light of manifestation and the western tower is the station of total darkness. The eastern tower is the object of the divine name, the Beautiful (*al-Jamāl*), and the western tower is the object of the divine name, the Majestic (*al-Jalāl*). All existing things are loci of manifestation for either one of these towers. Those who reach the perfect spiritual guide that is the manifestation of the Muhammadan Reality and pledge allegiance to him and follow his commands are the ones who attain the grace of God and they belong to the eastern tower. Thanks to the grace of God, they eliminate their hearts from all things other than God, purify themselves, find effacement from the necessities of human condition, and become of the light and the spirit. People of this station are called the one and only (*Vāhida*) party or the party of the saved ones. Their life, death, and destiny are emanated by God the Most High from the eastern tower through the means of angels. Those who do not pay allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide and (like Satan) do not bow down in front of Adam’s knowledge, perfection, and his mystery of the truth are the ones who fall within (the realm of) the western tower. They live in a circle of natural ignorance and original rebellion contaminated with the darkness of the body and exigencies of the selfhood remaining in blasphemy, denial, and heedlessness. In the same way that a bat without vision cannot benefit from the sun, they cannot benefit from the world of light and spirit. All of them belong to the sort of “All of them are in hell”.⁵²⁶

In a similar manner, Bayrami-Malāmis questioned the legitimacy of the other Sufi shaykhs. For Hakīki, these shaykhs were pretenders who had no understanding of “the truth”:

Now do not be deceived by the Shaykh of the people of attire, who is furnished with the outward knowledge and adorned with the *tāj* (Headdress) and the *khirka* (cloak). In order to obtain the love of God, go to the perfect guide who encloses the inward and the outward knowledge as well as the divine mysteries. He should be able to cast the divine blessing into the hearts of his seekers and provide them with states of love, ardor, inclination, ecstasy, and taste through the divine rapture. These are the indications and signs of a perfect guide. Without these indications and signs, those who claim to be perfect guides are not guides, but liars.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁶ *Irshadname*, 50b-51a.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid*, 53a-b.

It is this point—claiming the true faith for themselves while denying it from other Muslims—that made Bayrami-Malāmis an exclusive and clandestine order. Knowing the Truth in the accurate manner was a privilege that they had attained, making them quite distinct from the overall Muslim community. Thus they could be called by all kinds of derogatory names by the society, it did not mean much when they were firmly convinced of their privileged status. It was also this point, their criticism of established Sufi organizations, that made them suspect in the eyes of the followers and shaykhs of the *tarikats*. Thus many Sufi shaykhs were willing to see them interrogated, punished and persecuted.

Conclusion

In this chapter, several dimensions of the Bayrami-Malāmi teaching have been studied. It has been asserted that the most essential part of their teaching was founded upon the divine oneness that encompassed the whole universe. This mystical oneness was explained through prior examples of Sufi language at times, while at other times more crude forms of mystical monism found expressions in their poetry and prose. This form of monism has been explained by relying upon the descriptions of Aziz Nasafi with regards to the “people of oneness”. One of the outcomes of this perspective was that if the divine being constantly exhibited Itself through the existents of this universe, it was understood that this exhibition was destined to continue for eternity. In this sense, one’s death only meant that the unifying divine manifestation willed to make use of another

locus of manifestation. Thus shapes of the earth changed, while the exhibition continued eternally.

Another intriguing part of the teaching, on the other hand, claimed that there was a hidden hierarchy between the creatures of the universe, and that the human being stood on top of this ladder. Thus the human body was understood to be the most perfect form in which particles of the universe could come together to experience the divine being. This experience was often described in terms of momentary ecstasy, and it was seen as a sign of the holy saints that they could lead one into such an experience.

Saints of God, therefore, were extraordinary human beings who could tap into the mystical divine oneness in ways that could not be understood by ordinary human beings. It was believed that saints held unmatched power in their hands, and the most basic and crucial teaching of the Order was unwavering obedience to the *pīr* at all times under any circumstances. In a world defined in apocalyptic terms of a constant war between good and evil, it was believed that only by knowing this particular individual and obeying him one could reach salvation.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has investigated the formation and development of the Bayrami-Malāmi Sufi order within the Ottoman Empire. During the course of this investigation, it

looked for the roots of the Order within the Turko-Iranian world of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It has discussed how in this period, there was a tendency in the Sufi milieu to blur the line between the spiritual and political realms, and how the saint was able to find the ground to ask for complete dedication in both realms. Furthermore because it was a time of widespread apocalyptic expectations, the saint could lay claim to the title Mahdi, and emerge as a rival against the rulers of the time.

It was within this context that the Bayramiyya emerged under the auspices of the itinerant darvish Hamideddin Aksarayi and his more ambitious disciple Haji Bayram Wali. The latter established himself in Ankara at a time of political upheaval in Anatolia due to the Timurid attacks. As the political situation changed and the Ottomans were able to annex the lands they had lost in Anatolia, Haji Bayram chose to become a close ally of Murad II. Thanks to this relationship, he was entrusted significant land in Ankara and the number of his disciples increased significantly.

After Haji Bayram's death, however, the ways of the simple dervish, which must have been disturbed by these developments, reemerged under Emir Dede who became the founder of the branch that was eventually called the Bayrami-Malāmiyya. This branch assembled their own genealogy by time and followed distinct practices, which included refusing to wear the Bayrami dress, assemble in circles of remembrance of God, and accept endowments from the rulers. Thus the branch refused to abide by some of the most common practices of Sufism at the time.

By the turn of the sixteenth century, the Ottoman sovereignty had gained its most powerful form under Sulayman I. It was during this time that this certain branch of Bayramis came under close inspection for their questionable behavior. The Order not

only eluded state regulations that closely monitored the lives of Sufis by refusing to appear as established Sufis, but they also had close ties with *akhī* establishments and *qalandari* dervishes. Furthermore Pir Ali Aksarayi was busy with sending disciples all over Anatolia in order to expand his circle of allegiance. When his son Ismail Maşuki arrived in Istanbul in order to exclaim the Order's teachings, came to be known for his problematical sayings, and declined to go back to his hometown, a fatwa was issued for his execution in 945/1539. In the court documents, he is described to have held heretical beliefs regarding the oneness of God, the hereafter, and the necessity of the Islamic rituals. It is also noted that he claimed to be the Mahdi and questioned the faith of those who did not follow him.

During the following decades of the sixteenth century, activities of Pir Ali's adherents continued to be watched closely by the Ottoman authorities. When Hamza Bali proclaimed the Order's teachings in his hometown in Bosnia and gathered significant following, he was executed under similar conditions with Ismail Maşuki. The Hamzaviyya came to be known as an heretical sect with permissive behavior. In 982/1574 several local Ottoman judges were appointed with the job of disrooting the Hamzaviyya from the Balkan cities, and many adherents were either imprisoned or executed.

By the turn of the seventeenth century, on the other hand, the fate of the Order began to change as various figures belonging to the Order proclaimed the teachings in a more prudent manner and established close relationships with the elite of Istanbul. Teachings of Ibn 'Arabi came to be closely associated with the Order and they gained followers from among other Sufi shaykhs, government officials, and various figures with

madrasa background. Although another Bayrami-Malāmi *pīr*, Besir Aga, was executed in 1073/1663, the influence of the order continued to exist in remarkable ways in the courtly and artisan milieu.

It is my hope that the reader has come to appreciate the rich and complex history that Bayrami-Malāmis left behind by this point. It seems that once we enrich the state-centric imperial narratives, we are able to get a fascinating picture regarding the inner aspirations, conflicts and struggles of the Order. In this sense, this study surveyed this complex history and examined the texts belonging to the Order in a way that has not been taken up before. But still the picture we get is mostly fragmentary, and new information is likely to arise as more sources belonging to the era are read and analyzed.

This study is primarily concerned with the complex nature of growth of religious traditions. It has been my aim to reflect on the intimate moments within the Bayrami-Malāmi writings that record and present their inner struggle to explain their heritage in quite unfavorable circumstances. It is rather astonishing to see that they were able to explain some of the most controversial points of their teaching in a way that made them not only acceptable, but also appraised by the orthodox. In a similar sense, they were eventually able to infiltrate and control the webs of power that declared them to be heretics in the previous centuries.

In a similar manner, this study tried to shed some light into the phenomena of individuals and small groups treading the line between orthodoxy and heresy by showcasing the fluid character of defining the heretic. It is noteworthy that those who were defined to be heretics found interesting allies from amongst different layers of the society, they continued to live on as innocent martyrs in the popular imagination, and

some scholars with a madrasa background stood witness to their innocence. The messiness of the overall picture indicates a social milieu in which the heterodoxy and orthodoxy lived side-by-side, breathing into each other concepts, metaphors, and ideals.

During my research on Bayrami-Malāmis, it was interesting to realize that two completely opposing views regarding the Order continued to exist in Turkish society until modern times. The first one of these understood Bayrami-Malāmis to be deeply heretical, and regarded their belief system to be completely unintelligible for the mainstream Muslim audience. The second view, on the other hand, held that Bayrami-Malāmis were following an authentic tradition within Sufism, a tradition that they considered to be the core of Sufi teachings. I have let both of these viewpoints find some voice in the present study. Thus a meaningful end to this study would be underlining the perpetuity of the Bayrami-Malāmi Order in Turkish society and letting one see the significance of the religious sphere that let these opposing views exist and live alongside each other for centuries.

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